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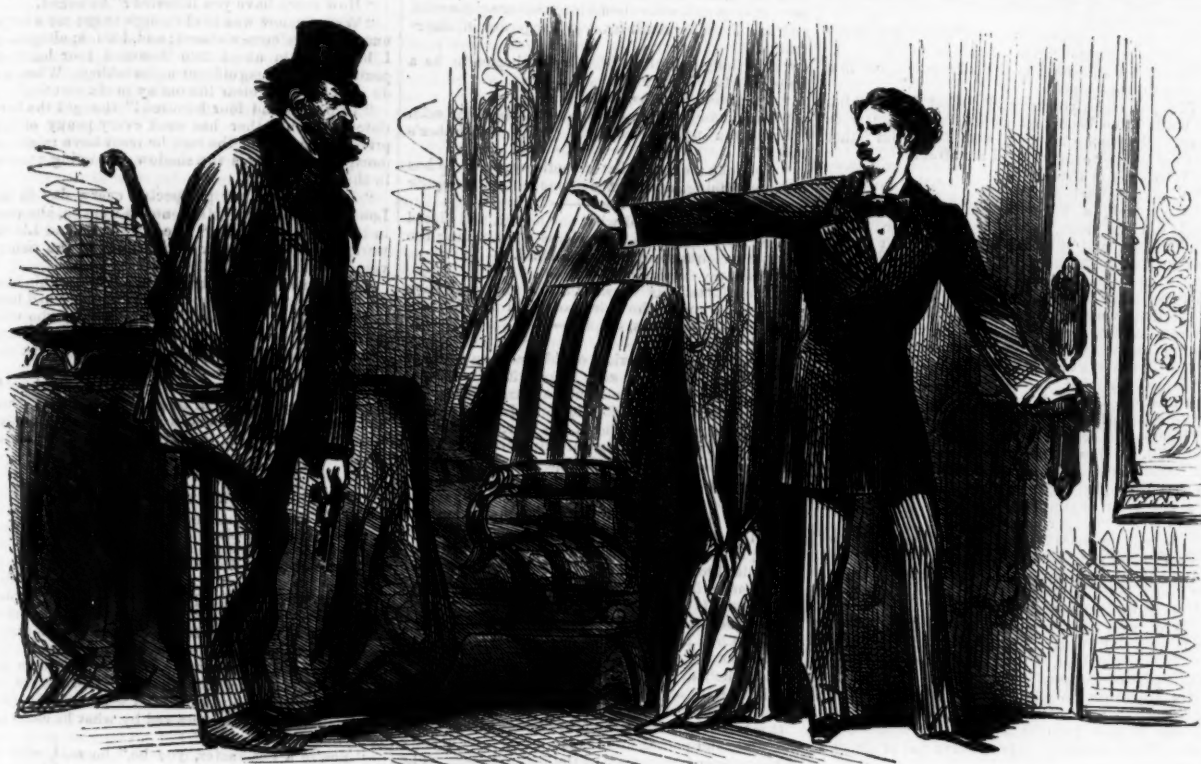
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[MATCHED.]

## STRANGELY MARRIED.

By ERNEST BRENT.

Author of "Strayed Away," "Milly Lee," "John Kendrake's Destiny," &c.

### CHAPTER XIV.

He reels as any reed under the wind,  
And cleaves unto the ground with staggering feet.

WHEN John Lenmore sent Mr. Falcon on his mission that evening, he went on to Glen Farm to see his friends at home. The strong love in his heart would have taken him direct to the Lodge to see Miss Amory, but John Lenmore had trained himself to obey the duty that took him first to his father's fireside.

He was pleased to see how little change there was in the old place, how little change there was in those within it. His father had as firm a footstep, as bright an eye; his mother a face as placid and as free from care-lines as when, four years ago, John began the dream of ambition that was now beginning to be realised.

With May, too, the change was as slight. A serious sweetness had grown with her womanhood, and if she was sometimes pensive she was never sad. Hearty, genial Will did not look a day older, and the only change in him was, that since John's absence he had acquired a habit of sitting in John's room and reading John's books; perhaps no greater change could have taken place.

John met his brother within half-a-mile of the farm. Will had his gun and two great lumbering dogs with him, but the empty game-bag by his side showed that he had not done much mischief that day.

"Bad sport," said John, pointing to the bag as he took Will Lenmore's hand warmly. "Are you out of practice?"

"Never fired a shot all day," was Will's reply. "I believe I am going your way fast. I have read a whole book nearly through in the last week."

"A sign of improvement, Will. It is never too

late to cultivate literary taste. What have you been reading?"

"Something about Waverley—and, I say, what a lot he has written!"

"Yes, we have much to thank him for," smiled John, taking his brother's arm, and so saving the life of an inoffensive rabbit at which Will was about to fire; "but the title?"

"The Bride of Lammermoor."

"A love story. Why, Will, this is a change, indeed! You who never went beyond the Farmers' Manual, or Smith's Book on Irrigation—Burden on Sheep, and the Grazer's Guide—what is the mystery?"

"Well, you know," said Will, apologetically, "a fellow cannot always be reading things of that kind; it makes him awkward in the company of girls. They don't care to hear talk about the perfections of farmers, and the proper thing to sow after a corn crop."

"The company of ladies!" thought John; "my brother begins to think of that, does he? Good-hearted, slow-headed Will, who never seemed to have a thought away from home. I wonder who it is."

"By the way, Will," he said, "I was not aware that I had Waverley in my collection."

"No, you hadn't."

"Then you got it from the Thorpendean library?"

"No, I didn't."

"Sent to London for it, then?"

"No," said Will, palpably failing in his attempt to appear careless, "no—oh, no! Never thought of it."

"Some one lent it you, then?"

William Lenmore shook his head, and it appeared to John that he was singularly reluctant to explain so simple a matter.

"Well, then, it was a present?"

This time Will nodded.

"Yes, that's it. You see, May has a lot of girls come to see her one time and another, and they get talking about things I don't understand, making

me feel stupid; so Mildred said she would send me some books; and that's how it was, you see."

John did see. It was evident to him that the sisterly kindness of Mr. Dacre's daughter was taking an effect on the young farmer.

"And I go to church with her and May every Sunday," said Will, "and we sit in Mr. Dacre's pew."

"Then Mildred has left the choir?"

"Yes; so has May."

"How is that?"

"Why, Cecil Belton and young Chorley joined lately, and they got talking to Mildred, and walking a little way home with us, so I told her I didn't want them to, especially as I can't sing, so she gave it up."

"That can be nothing but pure kindness on Mildred's part," reflected John. "Will is a noble fellow in his way, yet her deep and brilliant mind could never find companionship in his. I hope he will not think of her too seriously."

"I don't like Belton," grumbled William, after a pause. "He is always hanging about, meeting us everywhere with his eternal, 'Don't you think so, Miss Dacre?' and 'Charming, isn't it, Miss Dacre?' I feel inclined to wring his neck sometimes."

"Rather a forcible method of expressing your dislike, Will. You read chiefly to please Mildred, I suppose?"

"Yes; she likes me to read."

"Is there any other little accomplishment she likes you to cultivate?"

"Tries to teach me dancing," said Will, "but I trod on her toes so. I shall never do it, I know," he added, with a sigh.

"Never mind the dancing, Will; ball-room graces are not required by men who have to make a name and a fortune by the labour of their brain and the sweat of their brow. Depend upon it, true women prefer the more solid virtues of the head and heart. They prefer a man who treads well and firmly in the right way of the world to one who dances, even if he out rival Terpsichore."

"Mildred doesn't care for dancing much," said

Will, consoled. "I never saw a more sensible girl; she has such sweet ways too."

"Mildred Dacre is a woman to be revered," said John Lenmore. "She is one of the few who are true, and kind, and gentle. The man who wins her love will win more than the worth of a kingdom."

Will assented to that with a sigh. He cherished a dim and pleasant day dream, but it would not bear the light of reason; that dark-eyed beauty, with her tender voice and sympathetic mouth, seemed far, far distant from him.

"And now about home matters," said John, as the farm came in sight. "Are all things well?"

His brother answered in the affirmative, but in a slightly dubious tone.

"Yes; all right, you know, Jack, but I don't think the books have been kept so well since you went away. Mary does her best with them, but father does not tell her everything, I am afraid."

"Why are you afraid?"

"You know Carlów?"

"Very well, a Thorpendean attorney, and, if people tell the truth, agent for some questionable London loan and discount company. But father does not deal with him, surely."

"He does, though," was the serious reply; "and you know what father used to say of him."

"Nothing very flattering," said John, smiling at the recollection, for the elder Mr. Lenmore had a country gentleman's dislike of law and litigation. "Does Carlów visit as a friend?"

"Sits at our table, and takes more notice of May than I care to see."

"In a fatherly way, I suppose?"

"I never did believe in fatherly ways," said practical Will. "Man is man, whether sixteen or sixty, and Carlów is about between the two. It seems to me that these fatherly men use their fatherly age as a cloak for saying and doing things that we should kick a younger man for."

"There is, or there should be, no reason for misgiving," observed John, reflectively; "you can judge how things have been going, Will."

"Pretty well; but, you see, I don't keep the books."

"Have we had good crops?"

"Why, yes; good ground is a true friend if you use it well, and I think I use mine well."

"No doubt of that, Will; there is not your equal in this part of Sussex."

Nor any other, he might have said with justice; for the proper care of land and agriculture in general was William Lenmore's pride. It would have been difficult to find an unproductive rod of ground on the farm.

"And the cattle?" said John.

"Never better."

"What of home expenses?"

"Same as ever."

"What can be the extra expense, then, if there is any?"

"Well," said Will, reluctantly, "father goes out more than he used to; he has joined the Thorpendean Hunt, and I think he plays a little. There are extra expenses, but only now and then."

"In what shape?"

"He gives dinners—big ones, and lots of wine come in. I think Carlów sends it, and it goes like water, too."

John Lenmore looked grave over that. He knew that when legal gentlemen take to sending wine to their clients it is less a question of disinterestedness than interest. Clearly his father was borrowing money; it was as certain that he borrowed it at heavy interest—as certain that he had no security to offer but the farm and the land.

"I must see how matters really stand," said John to himself. "It would grieve me bitterly to see the dear old house fall into the hands of that half-bred legal vampire. I will get father to invite him while I am here, and by watching them closely I shall be able to see what is going on."

As it happened, Mr. Carlów was there that evening. He was a man of between thirty-five and forty, rather below the middle height; he had a strong, rugged forehead, and on the lower part of his face was a thick curling black beard and moustache, of which he was rather proud; he flattered himself that he was impressive to young men and attractive to women of any age. Two minutes' study of his character and John Lenmore knew him thoroughly.

"He never has been a true friend—never can be an honourable man," thought the barrister; "he is strong only in his greed for money, his vanity and his passions. He must not keep his footing here."

Mr. Lenmore was glad to see his son. He had grown proud of the young man whose name had become a household word in Thorpendean.

Between the London barrister and the country at-

torney there was a difference of caste, that the former unintentionally made the latter feel by the quiet hauteur of his manner. Nothing sits so awkwardly upon a man as the attempt to be at ease in the company of one his superior in every gift of nature and education. Mr. Carlów, becoming conscious of his own inferiority, conceived a strong dislike to the man who made him feel it.

John had not been in the house an hour before he came to the conclusion that all was not well. He took his sister May aside. Women are keener observers than men where home interests are concerned, and he knew he could trust to her power of observation.

"How long is it since Mr. Carlów began to be a frequent visitor here?" he asked.

"About four months, John."

"Then it began soon after my last visit," he said. "Have you noticed any change in my father's way?"

"No, John; except that sometimes when he has been out dining, and comes home not quite—quite what he should be, you know."

The barrister divined what she meant, and kissed her to keep the fresh young lips from telling the truth that comes so sadly from a child.

"Then, my darling?"

"Then he tells us we shall all be rich, and says that Mr. Carlów is the prince of good fellows, and sometimes—sometimes, John—"

"Tell me, dear."

"He says that Mr. Carlów could give me a carriage and a house in town," said May, with a shudder; "as if I could ever think of such a man as that."

"My little sister May," said John Lenmore, with infinite tenderness, "you need not fear. I must see what is and has been going on. But remember, that in any case, I shall soon be in a position to keep you and all of us if it were necessary."

Yet while he said so there was a sharp pang at his heart. The security of his father's position was part of the groundwork of his compact with Mr. Dacre. If the elder Lenmore, by any act of rashness, jeopardised his little, private fortune, and hampered the estate with debt, the whole responsibility of keeping the family would fall upon John.

And everything that lessened his four hundred a year kept him from Lissie Amory.

"Do not let it trouble you," he said, with the affection he had ever shown towards his only sister. "I shall know all the truth to-night. Carlów will not stay late."

It is possible that the thought had its parentage in the wish, and perhaps the keen, observant dignity of his manner brought about the desired effect. The Thorpendean attorney went earlier than usual, giving John a pressing invitation to dine with him, which John very courteously declined.

"And so you are working away up there in London," said Mr. Lenmore, when Carlów had retired. "We hear of you down here, John. Dolby, of the *Thorpendean Gazette*, copies all your cases from the London papers, and puts them in large type."

"I know," said John, with a smile. "He takes care to post me early copies. I find myself famous down here, at least. He asks me to send him full particulars of the evidence in court, and he invariably speaks of me as that 'eminent barrister, John Lenmore, Esq.' I do not suppose he has the least idea how dull and prosaic the matter really is."

"You are going to have a long rest with us this time, Jack. Put some wine on the table, Will, and sit down with us. A quiet evening with my boys is something to enjoy."

"I hope we shall have many such," said John, in whom the instincts of home love were strong. "I, too, am going to have a long rest, father. I intend to do some of the old work, too—see how the books have been—be your accountant, you know, and set the ledgers straight."

The squire changed countenance, but filled his glass and drained it with a laugh.

"So you shall, my boy; but—ha, ha!—you must not touch my private account just yet. Wait till next year—or only six months, it may be."

John would not show the uneasiness he felt as his suspicions began to receive confirmation; he wanted to hear the truth. Mr. Lenmore had been a provident man all his lifetime, content to live within the income derived from his freehold, and to keep untouched the two thousand pounds he had received with his wife.

"You know, my boy," said Mr. Lenmore, as he grew confidential over Carlów's wine, "I have for a long time been thinking that I ought to try and help you in your career; you are making a name."

"Fortune has been more than kind to me."

"But you have worked hard, John. I was against you going, at first, but it has made a gentleman of you; and if you marry Miss Amory I do not want Dacre to think all the money is on his side; so, lately,

when Carlów told me of a splendid chance, and showed me certain reasons why it must succeed, I invested—"

"How much, father, and what in?"

"A company; he is one of the directors, so am I; a new coal mine in Wales; it has never been touched yet."

John would not damp the squire's evident delight by saying "so much the worse for its prospects," but he groaned in spirit; he knew how many coal pits there were that had never paid working expenses.

"How much have you invested?" he asked.

"Well, Carlów was kind enough to get me a large number of preference shares; and, I think, altogether I have put in about two thousand four hundred pounds. It is a magnificent undertaking. When we do start we shall clear the outlay in six months."

"Two thousand four hundred!" thought the barrister; "then father has sunk every penny of his private money, and the rest he must have raised on mortgage. There is the shadow of coming trouble in this."

"You will see our prospectus every day in the London papers now," Mr. Lenmore went on, absorbed in his favourite topic. "The Gwarthlin and Llandwerio collieries; the surveyor thinks it the richest vein he ever saw."

John smiled bravely, but his soul sank within him. He knew that for weeks past the company had been in the hands of the lowest London agents, who were going about selling half-paid-up five-pound shares for ten shillings each, and were glad to get the money.

"Ruined!" he said, mentally; "and I shall have to tell Mr. Dacre this. Will he give Lissie time when he knows that she will marry into a beggared family; and could I take her, even if he would give her to me?"

#### CHAPTER IV.

There was a lurking devil in his mood. That waked emotions both of dread and fear; And where his glance of hatred darkly fell, Hope shrieking fled, and Mercy sighed in well.

The Corsair.

THERE was a strange quietude in Paul Dalrymple's manner that Mr. Harperley did not like. He had in the course of his eventful life seen men of almost every kind, and he had never feared one yet. His great strength and his brute courage had given him strong self-reliance, but that self-reliance rather failed now, and like most men in whom the brute is predominant, he was estranged by what he could not comprehend.

"You're a character, you be," he said, with an awkward attempt at self-possession, "and I like men who have got character in them, I do; it's to be, and you don't often see it."

"Tell me," said Paul, and musical as the low well-trained voice sounded, there was danger in it—"tell me your purpose in coming here. Behave in as civilised a manner as you can, and—but I was about to suggest an impossibility."

"Let's know how."

"I was about to ask you to speak like a gentleman, my friend."

The quiet, gentlemanly tone, the sneer that accented the words, stung the colonial, and he muttered an oath. He would have emphasised it by bringing his heavy hand down on the table; but Paul caught his wrist. There was the strength of a tiger in that small white hand—the uncouth giant felt that he had met his master.

"See here," he said, considerably subdued, "I came in a friendly way, I did, and travelled a few miles to tell you a bit about some of your old colonial friends, and it seems to me you don't show the civil I shall go—I shall."

Paul rose with an unmoved countenance, looked the door, put the key into his pocket, and sat down again.

"Not yet," he said, "I will have your story first."

"So you shall," replied Harperley, cocking his revolver in case of need, "straight right out, just as you want it. I can tell a narrative, I can; I am gifted that way."

"Begin."

"Well, then, just about two years ago, nigh that—more, perhaps, a little, I kept a store on the Peninsula, and I hadn't too many customers, but them as I had, I liquored up considerable."

"Well?"

"One night that I remember," said Harperley, dropping to some extent his exaggerated peculiarity of manner, and settling down into an English gravity that meant mischief, "I had three customers at my store—I can see them now as well as I could then—a tall, fair young fellow, who could make a woman's heart ache; an old man with gray hair like mine, and one I looked at most, because of something in his face and figure that was strange."



"How, strange?"

"He was not tall nor big, but he reminded me of a panther. I have seen a panther in my time, and I would just as soon face one of them as I would him, only I am always ready, I am. He was handsome, and he had the demon in his face that night. I saw it, I did."

Paul began to feel more interest than he cared to let the other see.

"Yes," he said, with his slow, calm emphasis; "and who was this handsome gentleman with the demon in his face?"

"You, Paul Dalrymple, Esquire, I could swear to you anywhere. You see, I was kind of interested in the three of you. I had nothing else to do, and I watched what went on through a big chink in the logs, and I heard every word."

"Very few were spoken, Mr. Harperley, if I remember rightly."

"When the old man was away, you spoke together. I heard Mr. Amory ask you if you were sure there was no danger in what you were about to do, and you told him there was not. Still I watched, and I saw you pour something into the old man's drink. 'He will sleep,' you said, 'and be the less fatigued for his long journey.'"

"Pardon me," interrupted Paul, gracefully, "I had omitted to fill your glass, the wine will be to your palate."

"Not if there's a liquor store within ten miles," was the fervent reply. "There's no tochre in that for Nathaniel Harperley. He didn't come from down-east to be used up so—he didn't."

"You smoke?"

"I rather like the flavour this way," and the colonial cut a wedge from his cake of tobacco, and dwelt upon it with infinite relish. "You may smoke; I am not particular."

"Thanks for the permission. Now proceed. You had reached as far as where I said, as you say, that the old man would sleep and be less fatigued for his long journey."

"There was something in your tone that made me think you intended to send him a very long journey," Harperley went on; "so when you took to your canoe again I followed. I have rowed with muffled paddles many a time, and I did it then, my friend, I did; and I kept in the shadow of the trees by the bank. You were in the moonlight; so I saw you distinctly, and what you did."

"Well."

"I was not near enough to hear your words; but I saw you lift the old man up and try to take something from his pocket; but he was a dead weight, and he fell over the side. You had to let him go to save yourself, and you did not get what you wanted."

Paul inclined his head as if listening with interest to some such story as one may hear with pleasure every day. He had the peculiar quality of nerve with which some men are gifted. A sudden surprise always startled him: given a few minutes, moments even, and his nerve settled down into a calm nothing could break.

"Being down-east and a colonial," said Mr. Harperley, "and I reckon these two things make a man a man all over, I can do most things under this sky. I can dive. I dove once and kept under seven minutes—fact, that is; and I knew what you didn't know on that lake, I did. You had dropped him in shallow; you might have touched bottom with your paddle just there."

Dalrymple drew a deep breath between his teeth, and his black eyes took a light like the dull glitter of steel.

"That's tochre," said the colonial, glad to see that he had made an impression at last. "What do you think of it, Paul Dalrymple, Esquire—touched you some?"

"I never interrupt a gentleman during the progress of a story," said Paul, politely, "especially when it interests me. Pray proceed."

"Well, I dove after him," said Harperley, complying with the polite request. "You pulled out of sight soon, if you remember, and never gave a look behind. I fished him out, stranger, and laid him on the bank. I felt in his pockets for what you wanted and didn't get, and I got it."

"Did it repay you for your trouble," asked Paul; but his countenance had changed now; he could not keep his lips from quivering slightly.

"It will; and you ought to be glad it was found by one who is disposed to be kinder friendly. It was a pocket-book with but a few dollar notes in, and some little documents that are worth a fortune, they are."

"To whom?"

"You and me."

"What did you do with the body?"

"Well, you see, stranger," said Mr. Harperley, slowly, "seeing that he was very dead, and leaving

him there might cause an amount of inquiry, I just took him a little further down stream and dropped him in again."

"Wise for once, at least. Is your story done?"

"Nearly. I took my canoe again and followed you. I followed you not only for that night, but for many days, nights, and weeks. I kept you in sight particularly. I was interested in those dry goods you conveyed to various ports—such dry goods as do not often get about—one hundred and sixty thousand pounds in solid gold."

"And how far did you follow this?"

"To London. I began to admire you, stranger. There was tochre in you of the real kind. I am gifted in most things, but you might give me a lesson or two. You sold that gold—every bar and dollar of it—to Mercer and Co., of Lombard-street, and he took you into partnership, he did, and I came here, and here I am."

"Well, you are welcome," smiled Paul; "and what do you want here?"

The colonial cut another wedge of tobacco, and put his long feet on the back of a handsome chair to enjoy it.

"Let's see," he said, reflectively; "first of all, there's this—I could make one of a crowd outside Newgate at eight o'clock some morning, and supply the subject for the platform, only I don't want to. You do these things better over here—plenty of light, plenty of drink, and plenty of fools to drink it. I guess now, with about ten thousand paid down I could fix one as would astonish this metropolis, I could; so just hand over, and we will shake hands, parting friends."

"Certainly a moderate demand."

"I might want half, my friend, but I am not unreasonable."

Paul sat thinking for some moments. Every word that the man uttered was true, and he was completely in the power of this uncouth giant before him.

"For the sake of my poor friend, Fred Amory," he said, "I am willing to keep this story to ourselves. I have a high respect for his family."

"Now that's good of you," sneered Harperley.

"It is. The contents of that pocket-book will tell you that he was deeply criminated. He dared not return, nor let Bryant see his guardian."

"I know that, stranger; but it was you who won his money, cheated him at cards, altered the accounts made in the letters of advice, and bought the poison for Bryant, telling Amory it was only a drug. Put down the mask with me, Paul Dalrymple, Esquire, and stand out like a man. Ten thousand isn't much out of a hundred and sixty. Hand over, and we say no more."

"For the sake of my friend, Fred Amory," said Paul, quite unmoved, "I will give you one thousand pounds now and five hundred a-year while you live. Yes or no?"

"What if I say no?"

"I ring the bell, send for the police, and give you into custody, charged on your own confession with having murdered Mr. Dacre's steward."

"Wouldn't pay you, stranger."

"What would be your tale against mine? I am a gentleman whose position here was recognised long before I left England. Bryant's own letters to Mr. Dacre tell him how rapidly I made money. I have made no secret of how much I brought home nor how I invested it."

This time it was the turn of Mr. Harperley to reflect. There was the new logic of truth in what Dalrymple had said.

"Anyhow," he thought, "I will let him give me a few cheques with my name on them. They will be proof of payments made to me."

"How would you like the money," asked Paul, "and when?"

"Now."

"I have not so much in the house."

"I don't mind taking a cheque, seeing that it's yours. I did some inquiring before I came down here, and I know that Paul Dalrymple, Esquire, of The Croft, Thorpendean, and Mercer & Co., Lombard Street, is a gentleman of position."

Thrown off his guard for once, Paul took out his cheque-book and wrote a crossed cheque payable to Nathaniel Harperley—it was for a thousand pounds.

"Does that satisfy you?"

"Quite—for the present," and Mr. Harperley rose to go. "That lady I saw is a splendid beauty, and no other. I hope you will do the civil for me, and ask me to dinner some day. Good-day."

"Good-day," said Paul, as he rang the bell for a servant to show Mr. Harperley out. "I shall be glad to see you when you pass this way."

Then he went back to his library. He sat for some time in deep and quiet thought, shaping out a course to keep this danger from him for ever. It had come in the hour of the promise of his fate—

when the joy for which he had hoped so fervently and sinned so much was within his reach.

Unless he did something, that man would live to be an eternal nightmare to his sleep, a dread to his waking hours. Unless he did something—the words whispered in silence had a dark, suggestive power that wrought out the picture of a terrible scene.

But he thought of Lizzie and his purpose changed. "He will come again—once, at least—once at most, perhaps."

He paced the chamber up and down for a few minutes, and then the memory of Mr. Harperley faded. He could only think of Lizzie, the poor girl who now was his for ever. Over that knowledge he thrilled with a glow of exultation—some what may, they could not take her from him.

"Yes," he said, "she is mine, and I would do as much, or twice as much to win her and to keep her."

As he went towards her room, to see if she would look at him with less sorrow and more hope, he met his mother. His hand was on the handle of Lizzie's door when Mrs. Dalrymple touched his shoulder.

"Paul," she said, and the strange ring of her voice drew him away as if it had magnetic power, "you must see Lizzie no more to-night."

"Mother!"

He looked at her intently. He had never seen her so pale and so resolute. She put her hand with her back against the door of Lizzie's room, as if her hand were a shield.

"I never spoke an angry word to you," said Mrs. Dalrymple, "but I shall say much that we shall both regret if you do not obey me. Lizzie must go home."

"But she is my wife—my willing wife."

"No; and if she were I would save her from you. She is your wife in name only, and never shall be more. The sacrifice must go no further. I have been much to blame."

The man trembled. The only earthly power that could have come between him and Lizzie stood there now—the only voice that ever had power to curb the impetuous passion of his soul now spoke to him. He looked at her in fervent appeal, but she did not move; in that firm, majestic face there was not the shadow of a change.

"When may I see her?" he asked, pleading almost humbly. It was the one fine trait in his dark, strange nature that he never forgot the reverence in which he held his mother. "Why have you, of all beings in the world, turned against me?"

"I have not," she said, sadly. "I have done too much for you already. I broke a sacred trust when I let her marry you; but I resume my duty now."

"When may I see her, then?"

Mrs. Dalrymple took his right hand in her left, and put her right hand upon his shoulder; his eyes sank under the sad, accusing glance of hers.

"When Frederick Amory comes home," she said, with distinct, deliberate emphasis on each syllable; "when Mr. Bryant's fate is no longer a mystery."

"Ah!" he whispered; "then you heard—"

"Every word."

"Surely you do not doubt me?"

"I doubt nothing, believe nothing; but till all is known, that sweet, pure girl shall be my sacred charge."

(To be continued.)

**STAMP DUTY ON LEASES BILL.**—This Bill, as amended in committee, recites that under the recent decision of the Court of Exchequer a lease made in consideration of a yearly rent and of a covenant to complete unfinished houses is liable both to the *ad valorem* duty in respect of the rent, and to a duty of 35s. as if it were a separate lease made for such further consideration alone. The Bill proposes to enact that no lease already made, or hereafter to be made, for any consideration in respect whereof it is chargeable with *ad valorem* stamp duty, and in further consideration either of a covenant by the lessee to make, or of his having previously made, any substantial improvement of, or addition to, the property demised, or of any usual covenant, shall be deemed to be, or to have been, chargeable with any stamp duty in respect of such further consideration.

**THE VACCINATION ACT (1867) AMENDMENT BILL.**—Mr. Candlish's Bill for amending the Vaccination Act of 1867, which is now before the House of Commons, is a very short one. Its principal clause is its third one, which provides that "no more than two orders shall be made under the 31st section of the Vaccination Act, 1867, for the vaccination of any one child." The effect of this clause is simply to limit the penalties for non-vaccination of any child to two fines, after the payment of which, in any given case, the law will have no further power to enforce vaccination. Whether this will pacify the anti-vaccination agitators we cannot say, but it appears to us a very illogical attempt to get out of a difficulty. If it be a right thing for the pro-

tection of the public as well as the protection of the child that the State should order its vaccination, and in case of disobedience on the part of the parent impose a fine, the State certainly ought to have the power of repeating the punishment until the law is obeyed. As it is, supposing Mr. Candlish's Bill to become law, a magistrate levying the two fines will be in the same position as a priest who sells indulgences. If it be only the intention to obtain a revenue out of the anti-vaccinationists, it would be a more logical proceeding to pass a law that every parent who refuses to have his child vaccinated should pay once and for all a certain sum to the State. If, on the contrary, it is held, as we believe, that vaccination is for the good of the population, and if it also be held to be the duty of the State to compel all to be vaccinated, there can be no question that this clause is wrong in principle. It simply permits a certain sum of money to be paid for the privilege of breaking the law, — a sum of money which to a rich man would be nothing, but to a poor man a very considerable fine, and in default of payment there is imprisonment. We cannot believe that the House of Commons would accept such a solution of the difficulty. The fourth clause provides a new form of certificate of unfitness for vaccination, in which the certifier must state the particulars of the condition of the child which unfit it for undergoing the operation. The fifth clause provides that the prosecutor in a case of infringement of the Vaccination Act shall be entitled to examine any certificate produced by the defendant, and to require that a certified copy may be taken of it, which at any future time may be produced as evidence of the contents of the certificate and of the name of the person making it. For our own part we have always maintained that Government have at their command other and better means of inducing the great mass of a population to submit to vaccination than fines and imprisonment. The epidemic which is now experienced in Paris is a proof of how dangerous it is to shake the confidence of a population in vaccination; but the very way to foster a sect of anti-vaccination fanatics and agitators is to visit the neglect of vaccination with punishments which may be construed into persecution.

### SCIENCE.

**ELECTRICITY UTILISED.**—Electricity as a motive power has been recently adapted to an elliptic lock-stitch sewing-machine, driven by a small electric engine, which might easily be put into a common hat-box. A series of eight magnets are set on the periphery of a circle, and around these revolves an armature of steel, which is continuously propelled by the magnetic action, and thus operates the machinery that moves the needle. The current may be cut off entirely, or the speed of the needle graduated as may be desired. The inventor is one Charles Gaume.

**A NEW COMET.**—Mr. Hind, writing from Twickenham Observatory, says:—Dr. Winnecke, of Carlsruhe, informs me by letter this morning that in the night of May 29 he discovered a comet resembling a "pretty bright nebula of about 2½ minutes in diameter." His observations on that night are not sent in a reduced state, but on the 30th he observed the comet's place as subjoined:—At 14h. 13min. 34sec., mean time at Carlsruhe, right ascension, 0h. 50min. 35sec.; declination N., 28deg. 52min. 18sec. The diurnal motion appears to be about 1min. 10sec. in right ascension (increasing), and 15min. in declination towards the south.

**AMONGST** the purest natural waters known are those of Loch Katrine, in Scotland, rendered classic by Sir Walter Scott, in his "Lady of the Lake." This water contains but two grains of solid matter per gallon of 70,000 grains, while the water supplied to Guy's Hospital, London, contains forty-seven grains, and the water of the artesian well at Southampton contains sixty-eight grains. The artesian well of the Paris basin contains but twenty grains. River water usually contains an amount of saline matter smaller than that found in well water. Thus, the Thames water, supplied to London, contains but fifteen to seventeen grains, and the water of the Seine, at Paris, twenty grains.

**PROBABLE ABOLITION OF OILS AS LUBRICATORS.**—A recent invention aims at the entire abolition of oils and all other lubricating material for boxes, slides, and every condition of motion where metallic friction is to be overcome or expected. It is claimed that such a result has been fully achieved, and there are engines now running with this material, which the proprietors aver have worked to complete satisfaction for weeks and months. It is the work of a scientific and practical gentleman, well known in Europe, who has spent a great many years in the study of physical forces and their effects, with especial reference to metals. The exact nature of the present invention cannot be

given, for the reason that patents are being sought for in several countries in Europe, and any clear description of the materials and processes would be likely to defeat that end. It may, however, be said, in a general way, that the discovery—which has received the name of Metalline—consists of such combinations and manipulations of various metallic substances, as to make a surface on which the ordinary axles, cranks, pins, slides, &c., of iron, steel, brass, or any other metal will run with much less friction, without heat that comes within the slightest possibility of danger, and without increase (in fact an actual decrease is claimed) of the motive power used. These, briefly, are the claims, and the inventor refers to a large number of trustworthy gentlemen who have examined and tried the thing, and speak from actual knowledge.

### TESTING THE DUTY OF STEAM-ENGINES.

At a recent meeting, Dr. Van der Weyde gave an explanation of some of the most approved means of testing the duty of steam-engines. As the engine may be considered simply as a system of mechanism for changing heat into motion, economy of fuel is the point most to be considered in any estimate of the utility or working value of a given engine; the questions of first cost and expense of attendance being of comparatively minor consequence. The quantity of fuel required to produce a stated power depends upon the construction of the engine itself, upon the character of the boiler and its furnace, and lastly, upon the skill exercised in firing. In estimating the horse-power of an engine, the old plan of multiplying the number of square inches of piston surface by the pressure in pounds per inch in the boiler, and dividing the product by thirty-three thousand, should be ignored, it having been proved fallacious nearly half a century ago. Instead of the steam pressure in the boiler, the steam pressure in the cylinder when the piston is in motion must be taken as the multiplier of the piston area. De Pambour, many years since, in France, demonstrated that the pressure of steam on the moving piston is frequently only a quarter as much as the boiler pressure. This diminution of pressure in the cylinder, as compared with that in the steam-generator, is due partly to bends and impediments in the steam-passages, and partly to radiation from the cylinder surface, but in the main to the fact that the steam having to follow the piston is not able to exert its full pressure. From this arises the utility of the indicator showing the steam pressure at all portions of the stroke.

For judging a steam-engine without regard to the kind of boiler used with it, the weight of steam has until very recently furnished the most practical test, although priming, &c., always makes the apparent evaporation greater than that which really takes place. For trials made on this system, Dr. Van der Weyde gave the following as the rules imperative to be observed, if anything approaching reliable results are to be obtained by this method.

- 1st. The water to be measured in tanks, and not by water-meters, which are always unreliable.
- 2nd. No steam to be used from the boiler, during the trial, for other purposes than for the engine to be tested.
- 3rd. To let the engine perform a constant well-determined amount of labour during the trial.
- 4th. The amount of water in the boilers at the end of the experiment should be exactly the same as in the beginning.
- 5th. When the boilers have blown off salt or muddy water, during the trial, this amount should be ascertained.
- 6th. The experiments should be very carefully and skilfully performed, and often repeated, in order to eliminate incidental inaccuracies, caused by temperature of the air, variation of water-level, &c.

The objections to the above method, familiar to engineers, may be obviated by a more truly scientific one, which consists in recording the units of heat carried off by the exhaust steam. By simply providing a condensing engine for any specific time with a definite quantity of water as a condensing agent, and noting, by means of a thermometer, the degrees of heat communicated to it by the condensation of the steam, the quantity of heat carried off by the exhaust may be found by a simple calculation. This has very much facilitated the accurate testing of different rates of expansion, &c. The units of heat thus carried off in the exhaust are of course so much abstracted from the force employed to drive the piston, and the less this quantity of heat, other conditions being equal, the more efficient the engine for a given expenditure of fuel. The mode of applying the test is very simple, it being only necessary to place one thermometer in the inlet of water to the condenser and the other at the outlet of the latter. By noting the difference in the temperatures indicated by the two, it remains only to know the quantity of water passed through the condenser per minute, and the results may be readily computed. In testing high pressure on non-condensing engines the same principle is applied, but in a somewhat different manner, the

exhaust steam being turned into water in a tank of known capacity, so that the rise in temperature for a given time furnishes, as in the previous instance, the required data of the heat carried from the engine by the exhaust.

**A NEW MOTIVE POWER IN AID OF STEAM.**—How to generate steam quickly, and at the same time inexpensively, has remained one of the problems left to engineers to solve. Mr. Galloway has invented an apparatus which, whilst it does not claim to supersede all steam boilers at present in use, yet claims that it can be affixed to them readily, and, once applied, save 50 per cent. in the cost of fuel, and pay for itself within one year. The invention, as we understand it, consists in the application of atmospheric air, which is, first of all, pumped down a pipe passing through the flue, the air being heated on its passage; the pipe is continued under the furnace, and, passing through, returns on the back under the fire-bars; and the temperature of the air having thus become raised by the waste heat, is driven into the boiler, and helps to generate steam in the chamber, the action of the piston-rod assisting the process.

### HOW PEOPLE LIVE TOO FAST.

THE word "fast" has latterly obtained a peculiar significance as indicating a tendency to general high living and indulgence in sensual pleasures. A man of reckless expenditure, who indulges himself in all that can gratify his sensual tastes, is a "fast man" in the common sense of the term. This expressive adjective has also been applied to those who habitually risk money in games of chance, and has in some instances been coupled with the names of others, who speculate in doubtful stocks.

We have come to the conclusion that sensual indulgence, exciting games of chance or speculation in fancy stocks, are not the only ways in which men may live too fast.

Many a godly and devout divine is a fast man. Many an editor, lawyer, merchant, or scientific man, against whom no thought of suspicion exists as to the soundness of his moral character, is fast in as just, though not in so reprehensible a sense, as the man who wastes his substance in riotous living.

Fast living in the sense of such living as shortens life, is a much more common evil than it is generally regarded. We have been an observer of faces and character for a long time, as we have had opportunity in our daily intercourse with men, and we believe that in the vast majority of cases it would be found that the rapidity of the pulse is above the normal standard. Every man's life may be measured by pulse-beats. He will live, accident excepted, to make a definite number of these, and his life will be shortened in proportion to the excess of work performed by his vital organs, in a given time.

Excitement, physical or mental, is the cause of the rapid rate at which most people are living. The love for excitement is a vice, as positively evil in its effects as the love for strong drink, licentiousness, or gambling. It matters not what kind of excitement; all excitement is fast living, and begets a feeling of exhaustion in intervals of indulgence, which clamours for relief from some other form of stimulant.

Thus it is that the universal demand for artificial stimulants has increased, until there is perhaps not one in a thousand who does not resort to something of this kind. Alcohol, absinthe, opium, hashish, tobacco, coffee, tea, or whatever else it may be, is taken to support the system under the effect of nervous prostration, and to supply in another form the excitement which it craves.

Now all this is just the reverse of what should be the case. Instead of seeking excitement, health and long life demand that we should shun it. The natural, healthy condition of the mind and body is that of unruffled calmness. If excitements occur, they should be exceptional, not the rule of life. As soon as they become a necessity, there is a diseased state of mind and body, and the candle begins to burn at both ends.

**THE POST-OFFICE BILL AND THE IRISH TELEGRAPHS.**—Lord Hartington has recently explained that he did not say, in reference to the Post-office Bill, that any printed matter under 40z. would be permitted to go under cover for 4d., but that newspapers would either be charged 4d. each as such if under 60z., or would go in packets containing one or more at the present rate of 1d. for 40z. On the subject of telegraphic communication with Ireland, Lord Hartington wishes it to be understood that he did not say another cable would be laid down when it was required, but that there was no doubt that another cable was now required, and that the question of its manufacture and laying down was now under the consideration of the engineer to the department.





[A STARTLING REVELATION.]

# REGINALD WARNER.

## CHAPTER VIII.

VIVIAN's exploit made him the hero of the Grand Hotel, and at the evening gathering of the guests in the great drawing-room, he received so many compliments that he fairly blushed under the burden of his honours.

Among those who paid him marked attentions were the Hon. Augustus Craven (Conrad), who solicited the honour of an introduction, and Mr. George Derville, the detective, who introduced himself.

The remarks of the latter were particularly flattering.

"After what I have seen of you, sir," he said, with marked emphasis, "I should be surprised at no feat of daring on your part."

"You forget that I am a trained horseman," answered Vivian, carelessly. "What I did was really not worth speaking of."

"Upon my word," thought the detective to himself; "the brass of this fellow is inimitable. I thought I was a cool hand, but I'm a novice to him. What surprises me is his publicly showing himself when he knew that he would be detected and arrested. The fellow must be mad; his conduct is inexplicable on any other theory. However, my business is to watch him, and to follow him like his shadow. The prefect doubtless wishes to see how far his audacity will carry him, and so gives him a little play, as a cat does a mouse—sure of gripping him whenever she chooses."

At this moment Clara Vane entered the room, leaning on her father's arm.

If she appeared "a phantom of delight" when her runaway horse seemed hurrying her to destruction, and her cheeks were pale and her hair flying loose on the wind, how much more charming did she look now in a becoming evening dress, her raven tresses carefully smoothed and braided, the rich colour glowing in her cheeks and lips, and happiness dancing in her brilliant eyes.

She came up to Vivian and gave him her hand with frank cordiality, expressing her thanks for his timely aid in few but eloquent words.

Vivian blushed with pleasure, and thought that he would peril his life again and again for such words from such lips.

In the prosaic world there are some passages of exquisite romance—some dreams worth all the reveries of all the poets—and this meeting of the two young people was one of them. It seemed likely to prove a case of love at first sight, and there appeared no reason why its course should not

run smoothly, thus disproving the old Shakespearian adage.

Mr. Vane had already made inquiries about the social position of the prospector of his child, and the information he received was entirely satisfactory. He therefore had no purpose of checking the intimacy he saw would necessarily follow the romantic acquaintanceship of his daughter and young Warner.

"Have you entirely recovered from your shock, Miss Vane?" asked Vivian.

"I was never better in my life, sir," replied the young lady, with a smile. "It may be an unladylike confession to make, but, really, I have iron nerves—I never fainted in my life."

"Fainting is a folly," said Mr. Vane.

"It is sometimes an art," said Clara. "I hope no lady overhears me."

"Clara is so entirely herself," remarked Mr. Vane, "that she was proposing a walk to the Cathedral of Notre Dame. In spite of her self-possession, she is as romantic as any boarding-school girl, and she has set her heart on the expedition. Ever since she read Victor Hugo's romance, her head has been full of the old church, and the bell-ringer, and the archbishop, and Esmeralda and her goat, and the denec knows what all. I'm a practical man, Mr. Warner, and to me it's all nonsense!"

"Just think, Mr. Warner," said Clara, "of the effect of moonlight on the old towers, the glimmer of the great rose window, the black shadows, the lights at the altar, and the musical intonation of the vespers."

"Just think, Mr. Warner," said Vane, "of the damp from the ruin and the danger of rheumatism."

"Father hasn't a particle of romance in his composition," said Clara, laughing.

"Not a bit," said the old gentleman; "it's all nonsense."

"But you have promised to take me," said the young girl, shaking her finger at him playfully.

"Needs must when woman wills," grumbled Mr. Vane. "We shall be very grateful for your company, Mr. Warner," he added.

"Nothing could give me greater pleasure," answered Vivian.

The Hon. Augustus Craven, who sat near by, listening to the conversation, which, indeed, had nothing private in its character, longed to be of the party; but he had not then been introduced to the Vanes, and could not, with propriety, at that moment, ask Vivian, to whom he had introduced himself, to present him. He was, therefore, forced to postpone making the acquaintance till another opportunity.

No scruples of etiquette, however, held back the detective, who was determined to go wherever Vivian went.

"Sir," said he to Mr. Warner, "will it be presumptuous in me to offer my services as a guide? I can tell you, perhaps, some interesting things about the old pile you propose visiting, for I am perfectly familiar with its history."

"Sir, you are very kind," replied Vane; "and I accept your offer, with thanks. Professional guides are arrant humbugs—I hate them!"

So the party, consisting of Mr. and Miss Vane, Vivian Warner, and George Derville, set forth on their expedition.

The full moon bathed the city in its mellow rays, imparting a poetical charm to its interesting features; and when they at length stood in front of the grand old church, with its huge, square towers and rich portals, even Mr. Vane was surprised into an exclamation of delight.

They entered the sacred pile, which was dimly lighted for evening service.

Vivian and Clara held their breath, as they stood, side by side, listening to the solemn music. Vivian was leaning against one of the groups of clustered pillars that support the airy roof, when a voice whispered in his ear:

"Beware!"

He turned suddenly; but no one outside of their own party was near him.

A few minutes afterwards a light touch was laid upon his shoulder. He turned so quickly, this time, that he surprised the author of the warning, or, rather, that person did not seem anxious to conceal himself from the observation of the young Englishman. He, however, stood so that one of the pillars shielded him from the notice of the detective, who was at that moment engaged in conversation with Mr. Vane.

The stranger made a peculiar sign, and laid his finger on his lips, as if enjoining caution. Then he said, in very low tone:

"Conrad, you know me, and can trust me."

Vivian looked at him in utter astonishment, and shook his head. He had never seen the man before. "How absurd!" whispered the stranger in his ear. "You have no time for trifling. Are you mad to show yourself in Paris? Fly to-night, if escape is not impossible. Do you not know the person who is with you?"

"A Parisian gentleman, who is acting as guide," whispered Vivian, instinctively adopting the stranger's cautious manner of communication.

He is a detective! Follow me, and I will guide you to a place of safety; remain, and you are lost. Perhaps this is your last chance; come!"

At this moment the detective turned his head, and the stranger slunk away, and was lost in the dark shadows of the building.

"I must be bewitched," thought Vivian, "or else Paris is the City of Mysteries. This is the second warning I have received. Follow him, indeed! To be decoyed into some dark alley and lightened of my purse—not quite such a ninny."

And dismissing the subject, he resumed his attentions to Miss Vane, and with her listened to the voluble and really interesting legends of their volunteer guide.

"The man may be a secret police spy," thought Vivian; "but he is certainly a well-informed person, and so much the better if he is a government official; the pickpockets will keep clear of us."

After an hour passed in the church, they left it with reluctance. The detective had laid himself out to please the party, and he had been perfectly successful.

"I am sorry," said he, as they stood outside the venerable pile, "that I cannot show you an old statue that stood here in a niche five hundred years ago. It has crumbled to pieces ages since."

"Whom did it represent?" asked Miss Vane.

"The Virgin with the Ring," answered Derville.

"Was there any legend connected with it?"

"Yes, and a very romantic one," replied the detective.

"Oh, how delightful!" said Miss Vane. "Do, please, tell it to us, Mr. Derville."

"All legends are rubbish," said Mr. Vane.

"The story, the story!" cried Clara, impatiently.

"Well, then," said the detective, "you are doubtless familiar, Miss Vane, with the Opera of 'Zampa; or, the Marble Bride'?"

"I know it by heart, and adore it; it is so nice!"

"My legend suggested the opera," said the detective, "as you will see. Here, then, just on the left of the place where we are standing, stood this image of the Virgin. Among the pupils of the Episcopal school (five hundred years ago, mind) was a handsome young fellow, who set great store by a fine gold ring which he had received as a love-token from a fair young Parisienne. One day, fearing to injure it in the game of ball he was about to engage in, he took the ring from his finger and cast about for a place of safety to hide it in, when, lifting his eyes, he beheld the image of the Virgin, so lovely with her radiant smile and blue eyes, so bedecked with votive offerings, that he fell into an ecstacy, and bending his knee, exclaimed: 'Lovely lady, so gentle and delicate, fair and pure as the lily, I will love none other than thee; never more shall dame or maiden touch my heart, and in pledge of my plighted faith, I beseech thee to accept this pretty ring.'"

"The student was an insane donkey," interrupted Mr. Vane, bringing down his cane emphatically.

"Go on, sir," said Clara.

"The student had no sooner finished this address," continued the detective, "than the statue moved, and as the ring slipped upon her finger, it bent in such a way that the affrighted student could not detach it without mutilating the marble hand. Uttering loud cries, he fled to a priest to recount the prodigy, and was assured by the churchman that his affections must be consecrated to the divine lady, and that it would be impiety and felony to break his vow. Yet the sight of his earthly love was too much for him; he renewed his vows to the mortal maiden and married her. But that very evening the statue-bride appeared to him, and pointing to the ring upon her finger, menaced him with vengeance for his infidelity to her. Then the perjured lover left his house, fled from Paris, and walked and ran till he found himself miles away in a lonely desert. There he encountered a pious hermit, who kept house in a stone cave and fared sumptuously on herbs and dry bed, washed down with excellent spring-water. To him he related his pitiful story, and the good hermit, having listened attentively to his tale, told him the only way to escape from his troubles and fulfil his vow was to become a monk, which our young friend agreed to do, and so propitiated the indignant statue. What became of the other young lady, the jilted bride—whether she threw herself into the Seine, asphyxiated herself with charcoal, or went into some obscure chemist's in the Latin quarter, and purchased 'laudanum and arsenic for one,' the legend does not say."

"More likely," said Mr. Vane, "she took up with some other fellow, and danced her shoes off at the *Closerie des Lilas*."

"It's a shame to spoil a story so," said Clara.

"Between us two," said Mr. Vane, winking to Derville, "we've knocked the romance out of the whole affair—and that's what I like. I'm a practical man, and I don't care who knows it. But here's a cabman without a fare. Hullo! you sir!—take us to the Grand Hotel."

The Hon. Augustus Craven was lounging on the hotel steps when they returned. The detective took him aside.

"Sir," said he, "I am about to tell you a secret, and to ask you a favour."

"I will keep the one and grant the other."

"Your pretended countryman, sir," said the detective, "is an impostor. He is a thief and a convict."

"He!" cried Craven—"impossible. I should as soon think of you suspecting me."

"I know what I'm talking about," said the detective. "An arrest is hanging over his head, and I have been watching him. I am now going to headquarters to make a report, and, in the meanwhile, you will be serving the cause of justice by keeping an eye on him, as well as looking out for your own pockets. I shall return to my post directly."

The detective bowed and hastened away.

"And this is your argus-eyed police!" thought Conrad, as he indulged in a quiet, sardonic laugh.

"I am not Conrad the Convict, but this other fellow is—so says this profound Dogberry. And the felon is to watch the innocent man, whose wonderful, and, as yet, unexplained resemblance to a convicted criminal has brought him face to face with justice. The affair is getting complicated—how it is to end nobody can tell—but that I am safe in my disguise is certain. Now I must play the part of watch-dog for my friend, the detective."

## CHAPTER IX.

WHEN very shortly afterwards, Mr. George Derville, the detective, returned to the Grand Hotel to resume his vigilant watch over Vivian, the Hon. Augustus Craven left the building on an errand of his own.

That same night a party of about a dozen men had met in a back room of an upper story of the street of the Faubourg St. Martin.

It was a small room, dimly lighted. At the back was a platform slightly raised above the level of the floor, and on this platform in an oak arm-chair, before a table covered with papers, sat a man of middle-age, gray-haired, spectacled, and dressed in black.

One degree lower, at another table, sat another man.

On the floor, in a line with these two men was a third table covered with a black cloth.

Several persons, some young and some advanced in life, but all respectably attired, occupied chairs in the vicinity of the platform.

It seemed to be a business meeting, and it was so. The two men we have singled out were the president and secretary of a secret society. The last-named officer had just finished reading his notes of the proceedings of a former meeting.

The president rose and said:

"Gentlemen—as there is no other business before the meeting, I have the honour to propose to you the admission of a new member, for whom I stand sponsor myself."

"Name!" cried one or two voices.

"Augustus Craven," answered the president.

"He is an Englishman, and as we have none of his countrymen on the rolls, I think it advantageous, through this means, to extend the sphere of our influence and operations into a country prosperous and wealthy, and offering a wide field for our commercial enterprise. The candidate is adroit and daring. Those who are in favour of admitting Mr. Craven will please to manifest."

Every hand was held up.

"The contrary-minded will please to manifest. None? Then, gentlemen, it is a vote, provided the candidate stands the test. Your masks!"

At these words the president and all those present covered their faces with masks.

"Mr. Secretary," said the president, "perform your office."

The secretary rose, went to the door, and immediately returned, bringing in the Hon. Augustus Craven.

He was led, in the midst of profound silence, up to the table covered with black cloth, and halted, facing the president.

"Stranger," said the president, "for as yet we cannot give you the name of brother, are you willing to take the oath of fidelity to the brotherhood you seek to join?"

The candidate bowed low.

"Will you, disregarding the laws of the land, obey only the laws of the League?"

"I will," responded the candidate.

"Will you faithfully pay into the common treasury, to be divided equally among the brothers, all your earnings over and above your expenses?"

"I will."

"Will you be true to your brothers, even to the peril of your life?"

"I will."

Sentence of death being pronounced against any sworn leaguer who betrays the secrets of the society or denounces a brother, will you execute the punishment with your own hand if commanded by the president?"

"I will," replied Craven, firmly.

"Then swear it!" said the president.

The secretary removed the black cloth that lay upon the table, and disclosed a human skull and an Italian stiletto.

"Those emblems mean," said the president, "true as steel—to the death. Take the poniard in your right hand, and, placing your left hand on the skull, swear to perform all that you have promised."

Prompted by the secretary, and obeying the instructions of the president, the new-comer said:

"I swear to be faithful to all that I have promised—to withhold none of my gains from the common purse—to live and labour for the interests of the League, to succour a fellow-leaguer in distress, never to betray the secrets of the order even on the scaffold, and if I prove false in any or all of these requirements, may the dagger I now hold in my right hand be sheathed in my heart!"

"You promise well," said the president; "let us see how you perform. Do not lay aside your weapon yet. You will have immediate occasion for it. Know, then, that one of the League has proved a traitor at heart. He was preparing to betray us to the police. He has been seized, has confessed his guilt, and pleaded for mercy. Our answer to his plea is the unanimous decree of death. Our laws are inexorable—our safety lies in their rigid enforcement. You have been selected as the executioner. If your heart and hand fail you, we permit you to depart in peace. As you were brought to our door blindfolded, so blindfolded will you be conducted hence, and you will never see our faces. If, on the other hand, you abide the test, then will we unveil our countenances and receive you as a comrade and a brother."

"Try me!" answered Craven, firmly.

The president stamped his foot, and a trap-door in the flooring sank through the action of invisible machinery, disclosing a black and yawning abyss. It soon rose again to the level of the floor, but on it lay a man bound hand and foot to a sort of bier. His face was already blanched to the hue of death, and the only tokens of life he gave were the rolling of his eyes and the heaving of his chest.

Then every voice in the room cried, "Death to the traitor!" and the president, pointing his finger at Craven, sternly bade him "strike!"

Without a moment's hesitation the candidate struck the dagger into the heart of the victim, and the blood gushed forth upon the weapon. Instantly the secretary dragged the candidate back, while the trap-door sank with a crash through the floor. When it rose again, there was nothing on its smooth surface—the abyss had swallowed up all traces of the deed and the victim.

The president, descending from the platform, grasped Craven by the hand, and said:

"In the name of the League, we welcome and accept you as a worthy brother."

The others gathered round him, and every one shook hands with him, while some patted him on the back and told him he was the coolest hand that had joined them yet.

They then resumed their seats, and the president instructed the new recruit in the signs and secrets of the gang.

When he had finished, a member arose and said: "I have important information to give you. Conrad Rivers is out of Toulon."

"Indeed! that is good news," said the president.

"But it is not good news," added the member, "that he is here in Paris without disguise."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed several of the members.

"Without disguise?" cried the president.

"I saw him myself, this evening, at Notre Dame, in company with a party of foreigners and with a detective."

"A detective?" cried several members. "Treason! treason!"

"Order, order!" cried the president, rapping on his table. "Do you want to alarm the neighbours and bring the police down on us?"

"I can account for Conrad's conduct only in two ways," continued the member who had spoken. "Either he is mad—and I assure you his eye was clear, and he spoke as rationally as you or I—or else he has sold us to the government, and is here to betray our secrets and put the beaks on our track. This last is my conviction, after what I saw with my own eyes this evening, and I, Antoine Delmar, denounce Conrad Rivers as a traitor to the League, deserving death!"

"The accusation is false!" cried Craven, springing to his feet. "Conrad is as true to the League as you are."

"False! I saw him with my own eyes," said Delmar.

"Your eyes deceived you."

"My eyes and ears never deceive me," replied Delmar.

"Look at me," said Craven. "Did you ever see me, or hear me speak, before this evening?"

"Never."



"Then your senses are not trustworthy, for I am Conrad the Convict!"

"You!" cried half-a-dozen voices. "Absurd! Impossible!"

"I appeal to the highest authority. Mr. President, who am I?"

"Our dear friend and brother, Conrad Rivers," replied the president, laughing.

"Forgive me, boys, for this lark," said Conrad. "It was no mere idle jest. Before carrying out certain plans of mine, which I hope will result in a large addition to our treasury, it was important that I should make sure that I was completely disguised. If I passed the ordeal of your scrutiny, I knew that I should be safe. Our worthy president favoured my plan, and has been kind enough to go through the tedious ceremony of initiation. By the way, you want a new dummy—you must remember that every museum now-a-days can show a better mechanical figure than the one I stuck my knife into to-night. He must be a very greenhorn who takes him for a living man. Got a new dummy, by all means. We're rich enough to afford it."

"Gentlemen," said the president, rapping the table, "is there any further business before the meeting?"

No business being presented, a motion to adjourn was immediately carried.

Then, as if by enchantment, the folding-doors at the back of the room flew open, disclosing a magnificent hall, bright with mirrors and gilding, and illuminated by a superb cut glass chandelier, set with a hundred wax tapers, that threw a flood of light on a long supper table, at which sat a dozen pretty women, the wives and sweethearts of the members of the League.

As the latter took their places, their female companions were surprised to see the president escort a stranger, as they supposed, to the seat of honour, at his right hand.

"Ladies and gentleman," said the president, rising, "all your glasses, and join me in drinking the health of the Hon. Augustus Craven, otherwise Conrad Rivers, the exile of Toulon."

The convict's health was drunk with all the honours.

"My dear friends," replied the convict, "for the honour you have done me you will please accept my most sincere thanks. What friendship is like the friendship of those the world calls rogues? May we be always prosperous! We must all hang together, my friends, or else we shall all hang separately. Need I say how happy I am to find myself back among you! What a contrast this splendid hall, with brilliant assemblage of fair women and brave men, presents to the government hotel at Toulon? Believe me, it is my highest ambition to be worthy of your companionship. Like a certain great man, I am meditating a *coup d'état*, and when I make my strike, I am confident you will say 'he is worthy to be one of us.'"

There was laughter at these words, but it rang hollow; the gaiety of these outlaws and their companions was false. Yet they kept up a show of merriment, and tried to persuade themselves that they were happy.

After a plentiful feast, the table was set back, and three blind musicians having been introduced, dancing commenced. Wild and thrilling waltzes, polkas, and mazurkas were followed by quadrilles, danced in the style of the Mabilé Garden, and then, before midnight, the party broke up, retiring by twos and dispersing so quietly that nothing occurred to attract the attention of the city police. Conrad was in his bed at the Grand Hotel before midnight.

#### CHAPTER X.

The following day was bright and sunny, and, after some hours passed in wandering through the Great Exhibition, that world of fairy marvels, Mr. and Miss Vane and Vivian Warner went on board one of the little steamers plying on the Seine, and paid a visit to the palace and park of St. Cloud.

The young people were not embarrassed by the presence of Mr. Vane, frequently straying out of earshot from the side of that worthy gentleman. In the park he refused to accompany them in their rambles, and sitting down on a bench to examine the contents of a budget of letters and papers he had brought with him, told them to pursue their explorations and return to him when they were tired of their stroll.

Of course they eagerly embraced the liberty allowed, for they were drawn towards each other, and the dawn of love, perhaps unconsciously, gladdened their youthful hearts. Certainly as yet Clara knew not why the sky seemed brighter, the sunshine more golden, the song of the birds sweeter, and the ripple of the river more musical than ever before.

No word of love passed between them, but there

was the happy exchange of confidences which preludes the confession of a sweet and mutual secret.

As they were strolling along in a secluded alley, Derville the detective came from the opposite direction. He saluted them courteously, and then asked if Mr. Vane had come to St. Cloud with them.

Clara answered affirmatively, and indicated the spot where she had left her father. Derville bowed and said he would go and have a chat with the old gentleman. Both Clara and Vivian were glad to be relieved of his presence—they wanted no witness to their familiar converse.

Derville joined Mr. Vane and sat down on the bench beside him.

"A fine day, Mr. Vane," he said.

"Yes; wonderful weather for Paris, where it rains one hundred and fourteen days out of the three hundred and sixty-five."

"I met your daughter and Mr. Warner hard by," said the detective.

"Aye, aye!" answered Vane. "They have light feet and light hearts. I preferred resting here under the shade of the trees."

"Any Frenchman who saw them alone together would say they were engaged," remarked Derville. "In France no young people are left to themselves in that way unless they are affianced. In England, I believe, there is no special significance in it."

"That's true," said Mr. Vane. "With us young people do pretty much as they please. But in this case, Mr. Derville, it may be well that there is a warmer feeling than mutual courtesy springing up between Mr. Warner and my daughter, and I'm not the man to discourage it. Young hearts will have their own way; and I hold that parents have no right to attempt to control the affections of their children, unless there is a very serious objection to the suitor."

I am a rich man, Mr. Derville, thank Heaven, and my daughter is an heiress, yet if her suitor were a poor man, provided he was honest and industrious, and not a mere fortune-hunter, I would bestow her hand upon him. I make no secret of that—there's no duplicity about me. I abhor it. And if Mr. Warner is to be the happy man, so much the better. The alliance is suitable in every respect. He is none of your pretenders to nobility—no pauper count or baron, but an educated English gentleman, the son of a man of respectability and fortune."

"Mr. Vane," said Derville, earnestly, "it is your duty as a father to break off this intimacy peremptorily and at once, before your daughter's affections are irretrievably engaged."

"What do you mean, sir?" exclaimed Vane.

"I mean," answered Derville, "that this man is a vile impostor."

"Vivian Warner an impostor!" cried Vane.

"He has no more right, sir, to the name he bears than you or I have," pursued the detective.

"This is an astounding assertion, Mr. Derville," said the old gentleman; "and before I pay heed to it, you will pardon me for saying that I must know something more of the man who makes it. You are comparatively a stranger to me. Who are you?"

"A member of the secret police," answered Derville. "If you will please to cast your eyes upon that document, you can satisfy yourself upon that point."

He handed Mr. Vane a parchment commission bearing the sign and seal of the prefect of police.

Mr. Vane scrutinised the document carefully, and then gave it back to the detective.

"Are you prepared to hear me now, sir?" asked Derville.

"Certainly; but make your story brief. Who is this Vivian Warner?"

"His real name is Conrad Rivers, and he is an escaped convict."

"Impossible!" cried Vane. "That fair-faced, frank, gentlemanly young man! And if he is an escaped convict, why does he show himself openly? Sir, your story is incredible. It must be a case of mistaken identity."

"The conduct of the villain is utterly inexplicable, I admit," answered the detective. "It has puzzled all of us. But there can be no mistake, as you suggest. Look here, sir. Do you recognise this photograph?"

"Of course, I do," Vane answered, without hesitation. "It is a perfect likeness of the young man."

"Well, sir, the picture was taken a year ago, just before he was sent to Toulon. I obtained it from the archives of the police. And I have an order from our chief—you can see it if you like—for arresting this man. From the moment of his arrival in Paris I have been detailed to watch him, and I have done so faithfully. If I had been authorised to make myself known to you and put you upon your guard, I would have done so sooner. The authority was only given me this morning. In conclusion, I beg you to regard this communication as strictly confidential. You may, however, under the same restrictions, impart it to your daughter."

"I thank you heartily, Mr. Derville," said Vane. "Your revelation is astounding, but your proofs are overwhelming."

"Here he comes," said the detective, looking up. "Keep your own counsel. Find some pretext for getting rid of him for a few moments, and leave the rest to me."

The young people now rejoined Mr. Vane.

"Don't think me uppoite, Mr. Warner," said Vane. "But I have received some private letters from London by this morning's mail, and wish to communicate their contents to my daughter. Suppose you and Mr. Derville take half an hour's stroll together."

Vivian readily assented to the proposal, and putting his arm within Derville's, walked away leisurely under the overhanging trees.

"Clara," said Mr. Vane, the moment they were alone together, "we have escaped a terrible danger."

"What do you mean, father?" cried the young lady. "Have you heard news from home?—has my mother been ill again?"

"No, no, my dear—all well at home, thank Heaven. The danger was nearer—it arose from our intimacy with a villain. You will never see that man again."

"That man, dear father? I don't understand you."

"This Warner—this impostor!"

"Vivian Warner an impostor!" cried Clara, laughing. "Well, sir, I thought you were opposed to practical joking. But you do it very well. You really alarmed me for a moment."

"I tell you, girl, that I was never more serious in my life. The fellow is a villain—an escaped convict."

"Who in the world could have told you so preposterous a story?" cried the young lady.

"Mr. Derville," replied Vane, gravely; "he is a detective. I have seen his commission, and he has an order to arrest this pretended Warner, for breaking prison, as they call it. In half an hour the fellow will be in double irons, and, probably, before the day closes, on his way back to Toulon."

Miss Vane had boasted of her nerve and self-possession. She had need of all her courage now—her dream of happiness had been so rudely broken. The very earth seemed to quake under her, and she was forced to lean upon her father for support.

"My poor child!" said Vane; "we have both of us been deceived. Merciful Heaven! I tremble to think what would have been the result if our eyes had not been so timely opened. But come—let us instantly return to Paris. Are you strong enough to walk to the steamboat pier?"

Clara Vane raised her head proudly.

"Never fear me, sir," she said. "It is a terrible shock, to be so suddenly awakened from a dream—to be told that one to whom I owe my life—who seemed so frank and noble—is a common felon. I can scarcely realise it even now; I think there must be some error. But if all this is true, I shall forget the past two days—a pleasant dream while it lasted; but—come, father, let us hasten away; this spot has grown hateful to me."

The father and daughter hurried down to the pier, and reached it just in time to take the returning boat to Paris.

Meanwhile, Derville and Vivian, who little dreamed that he was, or was soon to be, a prisoner in his companion, had reached a secluded spot in the park of St. Cloud, and sat down on a bench under the trees.

Derville looked in his companion's face, and then burst out laughing.

Vivian was surprised at this sudden outbreak of merriment, and looked puzzled. He said, at last:

"Well, Mr. Derville, when you have indulged your hilarity sufficiently, perhaps you will be so good as to admit me to a share of it by explaining the cause."

"Well, well, my flash covey," said the detective, composing his features with difficulty, discarding the polished manners he wore as a mask in the great world, and reassuming the off-hand style and slang phraseology natural to him; "don't you think you have played this little game long enough? If you don't, the chief does. To out the matter short, you're wanted."

"The chief!—wanted?" cried Warner, bewildered. "Who wants me?—for what?—and who are you?" he added, haughtily.

The detective went off in another fit of merriment, and it was a long while before he could restore his features to their wonted composure.

"One would say that you were the picture of offended innocence," he said. "Whatever you are driving at, passes my comprehension. But if you insist on playing out the play, I'll fight you with your own weapons. We'll suppose, then, we have never had any dealings together—that we saw each other for the first time the day you saved the pretty girl's life."

"Certainly. I met you then for the first time, at the Grand Hotel," answered Warner, angrily.

"Be it so. Well, then, to carry out the farce—let us suppose that you learn for the first time that I am a detective."

"A detective!"

"Yes, Mr. Vivian Warner, if you persist in that name—a detective, and here is my commission."

"I see very well, sir," said Vivian, "that you are what you represent yourself to be, a government detective, and it explains the vulgarity of your present manner. But how does that concern me? What has the Paris police to do with me?"

"Still playing the innocent. Oh, very well, you won't have a great while to amuse yourself in. I arrest you—you are my prisoner. That's plain enough."

"I defy you to arrest me!"

Dervillo rose. He instantly laid aside his jesting air, and there was a cold, hard glitter in his resolute eye, as he drew a revolver from his pocket and cocked it.

"Don't carry the joke too far," he said, menacingly. "It is no jesting with an official who has such a tool as this in his hand, and just such another barker in reserve. Now—will you come quietly?"

"Of course," said Vivian, haughtily. "I submit to force—but the British ambassador shall hear of this outrage."

"All right, my boy," answered the detective. "I'll take care of you, and the emperor will take care of the British ambassador. But I'm glad you listen to reason. Powder and lead are very persuasive arguments. If you go with me quietly, there shall be no exposure and no scene; we will return to Paris amicably together, but I warn you that at any attempt at resistance or escape, I will send a brace of bullets through your head."

"I shall make no resistance," replied Vivian, sullenly. "But I warn you that you shall bitterly repent this outrage."

Indignant at this arrest, but feeling that it must be in consequence of some outrageous blunder on the part of the police, which could be explained and apologised for at head-quarters, Vivian accompanied the detective on the steamer back to Paris.

(To be continued.)

## LADY BARBARA.

### CHAPTER VII.

THE funeral at Chessom Grange was over. The body of the good old squire had been taken to its rest in the country churchyard. His generous heart, with its quick sympathies, its pulsations stilled for ever, was hidden away under the damp sods. The bluff and jovial face, the kindly eyes, the smiling mouth, were all hidden from the longing eyes of those who had loved him. He was gone; and the girl he had loved and cherished as his own, whom he had sheltered from every childish grief, and whose path had lain among the sunny places, by reason of his tenderness and love, was left alone! How utterly alone she was soon to know!

It was the day after the mournful ceremony.

In the pleasant sitting-room, the wide windows of which were open to admit the warm sunshine and fresh summer breezes, doubly grateful after the late funeral gloom, the new proprietor of the Grange was striding slowly to and fro.

As the reader knows, he was Edmund Chessom, the squire's only son, yet no greater contrast than he presented to his late father can readily be imagined.

He was not tall, but slender, with an angular figure, and slow and cautious movements. Not more than five-and-twenty, he yet looked ten years older, possessing a thin face, sharp features, and shrewd, unsmiling eyes. His thin lips were compressed closely, and as if habitually. He was not a man to feel, much less to give way to, generous impulses, but he prided himself on being scrupulously just. Hard-headed, cold-hearted, cautious, more thoughtful of himself than of others—such was he upon whom the mantle of the impulsive, generous, and noble old squire had so unexpectedly fallen.

There was a complacent expression on his face as he halted by the window, and looked out upon the smooth green lawn and the cool grove beyond.

"Not a bad inheritance to come into at my age!" he mused. "It's a pity poor father had to leave it so suddenly. In the right hands, it can be made twice as productive as it now is. I am a fortunate man!"

He contemplated his possessions a little time in thoughtful silence, and then roused himself abruptly, as he heard a light step in the hall.

The next instant Dora entered the room.

She was dressed in the deepest mourning. Her face was very pale, and her eyes were red and swollen with weeping. She had a stunned and bewildered look, as if she could not even yet realise the blow that had fallen upon her.

"Good morning, brother!" she said, with a faint and woful little smile, and with a strong effort at self-command. "Jane told me you wished to see me."

Mr. Chessom took her hand, giving it a faint pressure, and led her to a chair near the window.

"Yes, I sent for you, Dora," he exclaimed, resuming his slow walk. "I want to have a conversation with you concerning our future—yours and mine. Of course, my father's death necessitates many changes. Have you bestowed any thought upon the matter?"

"No, Edmund. I have not thought of myself at all—only of papa! Poor, poor papa!" and the sweet young voice broke into quivering sobs.

Edmund Chessom frowned involuntarily. Dora's anguished cry irritated, rather than touched him.

"Then you have not thought of your future?" he asked. "You have formed no plans?"

"None, Edmund;" and Dora's voice had in it an accent of surprise.

Mr. Chessom quickened his steps a little.

"Humph!" he said. "How old are you, Dora?"

"Seventeen."

"Ah, yes. Now let us understand each other, Dora. I want to have a frank talk with you. I don't doubt the sincerity of your grief, my dear girl. It's all very natural for you to feel grief, under the circumstances; but if you could control your emotions, I should be able to speak more freely."

His formal tone and unsympathetic manner affected Dora much as an unexpected shower-bath might have done.

She gave a quick, faint gasp, choked back the sobs she had been unable to control, and became strangely quiet.

"There, that will do," said Mr. Chessom, approvingly. "You will find self-control a most necessary virtue, Dora, and the sooner you learn it the better. But to proceed with what I had to say. I have a revelation to make to you—a revelation which will utterly astound and perhaps overwhelm you. Can you bear to hear it? Shall I go on?"

"Yes," said the girl, in a whisper.

"Can it be possible that you know what I mean?" asked Mr. Chessom, regarding her fixedly. "Are you aware, Dora, that you are not—not my sister? that you are not the daughter of my parents?"

Dora nodded dumbly. She could not trust her voice to speak.

"Ah, my father told you, then?"

Again Dora nodded.

Mr. Chessom drew a sigh of relief, and resumed his walk, which had been momentarily interrupted.

"I am glad to hear it," he said. "I was afraid the discovery that you were but an adopted child of my parents might overcome you. The way is now clear to a complete understanding between us. First, let me tell you of my plans. I shall settle down at the Grange in my father's place. The life of a country gentleman will suit me exactly. I am engaged to be married to a lady who lives in London, but our union will be deferred a year on account of my father's death. It will not look well to have bridal gaieties at the Grange within a year of my father's funeral. And so you have thought of nothing as yet for yourself?"

"Nothing."

Mr. Chessom took another turn or two, and then exclaimed:

"Of course you know enough of the world to know that it will be impracticable for you to remain at the Grange? For the next year this will be but a bachelor establishment—not at all the home suitable for a young girl of no kin to the proprietor. The lady I expect to marry would rightly object to your stay. People would talk—"

"But no one knows that I am not your sister, Edmund."

"You know it. I know it. The lady I am to marry knows it. The secret can remain a secret no longer, nor is it desirable that it should. So long as my parents lived, they had a right to do as they chose in the matter, and of course I have a similar right to do as I think best. I am your friend, Dora, but I am not your brother, and I do not see that there is any use in keeping up the false pretence of being so."

A sobbing sigh burst from Dora's lips. With a piteous look, she turned her face to the window.

"Don't mistake me, Dora," said Mr. Chessom, with a vague uneasiness, touched by her look. "I think as much of you as ever. You are a dear little girl, and I want to do right by you. I hear from the servants, of whom I have made some inquiries, that the young squire comes here very often. Are you engaged to be married to him?"

Dora shook her head.

"Do you love him?"

Dora answered by a gesture.

"I am sorry. Squire Weir would have made you

a good husband. Who is this Warner who has been here so much? Not the Warner who is connected with the noble family of Champney?"

"Yes. He is the cousin and secretary of Lord Champney," said Dora, in a low, quivering voice.

"Indeed. He hasn't been here since my father died. He is not a very devoted lover. Where is he?"

"He does not know of—of papa—. He went to London last week. I had a note from him the morning after papa—"

The tremulous voice broke down in a gust of passionate sobs.

Mr. Chessom walked the floor, frowning impatiently, until the sobs had died away, and the slight figure became still, and the pale face calm again.

"Then he is in London now?"

Dora bowed her head.

"You haven't written to him the sad news?"

"No—oh, no!"

"Perhaps it's as well. Mr. Warner might be pleased to marry into the Chessom family—as no doubt he would. More than one Chessom has married a noble. But it would be quite another thing to marry the penniless daughter of a pair of vagrants—a child picked up by chance on the road, and adopted out of pity for its helplessness and beauty! Mr. Warner is a man of the world, not a Don Quixote, nor a knight of chivalry, and he will act as men of the world act. You have seen the last of your fine lover, Dora."

Mr. Chessom did not mean to be cruel. He believed that he was setting the facts before Dora in a sensible manner. He lacked the delicate tact and the fine sympathies which belong to the finest type of men, and did not dream that his every word cut into Dora's sensitive soul with the keenness of a knife.

As the girl did not answer, Mr. Chessom soon resumed:

"You have, therefore, no lover and no prospects. Is not this so?"

"You have not judged Mr. Warner rightly," cried Dora, in her impetuous way. "You wrong him. He will come to me. He loves me, not my birth, not my supposed wealth, but just me!"

Mr. Chessom smiled, with conscious superiority.

"I judge of a man of the world as a man of the world," he said, quietly. "Don't deceive yourself with false hopes, Dora. Mr. Warner's family would prevent his *misalliance* even if he were giddy and thoughtless enough to insist upon marrying you. Would you go into the Champney family to be looked down upon? Would you be the cause of your husband's disgrace with his relatives? You have no idea of the haughty pride of these titled people. They do not care so much for fortune, I have heard, as for good blood—"

Dora shivered.

"Don't," she said, putting up her hand pleadingly. "You may be right, Edmund. I will never consent to bring disgrace or trouble upon Mr. Warner."

"Then what remains? My father made no provision for you. He left you totally dependent upon me—"

"He meant to provide for me," interposed Dora, rousing herself. "That last day he went to see his lawyer, who was out of town, he made an appointment to meet him the next day. Papa told me himself that he meant to leave me a fortune—the same as if I had been his own daughter."

"Then why didn't he?"

"You know why, Edmund!" cried the girl, in an anguished voice. "The end came that very night. Oh, papa! papa!"

"Dora, it will injure you to give way like this to a useless grief. Tears won't bring my father back!"

Dora calmed herself by a desperate effort.

"As to my father's intentions," continued Mr. Chessom, calmly, "I can't help but think that if he meant to provide for you, he would have done so! He had many years in which to do it, if he had so desired. You must have mistaken his meaning, Dora."

"Oh, no, I did not, Edmund."

"But the facts bear me out in persisting to think so. You could not have understood him rightly. If he had meant to leave you something he could easily have made a will at any time during the past seventeen years. Doubtless he thought, as most men would have thought, that he had done his part by you. He took you out of the highway, adopted you as his own, provided you with governesses and teachers, dressed you like an heiress, and gave you every advantage that money could purchase. And to-day, Dora, you are competent, or ought to be, to earn your own living by teaching. How would you like to be a governess?"

"I—I don't know."



"You certainly cannot want to remain at the Grange after what I have said?"

"Oh—no, no!"

"Then you'll have to become a governess. There is no other resource for you that I can see. You have no taste for painting, I suppose—no fancy to become an artist?"

Dora replied in the negative.

"There is nothing you would prefer to teaching?"

"I can't think, Edmund. My brain is in a whirl. You must decide for me."

"Then you will be a governess. I have already bestowed considerable thought on the matter. You had better proceed to London. I know of lodgings there that will just suit your purse and condition. I'll give you a line to the landlady, and she'll make you comfortable. I will also give you a letter to Miss Coningsby, my promised wife. She has younger sisters, and will use her influence to procure you pupils. You will soon fall naturally into the position of a daily governess, and will enjoy eating the bread of independence."

"And you will enjoy being rid of me!" cried Dora, with a passionate bitterness. "I have nothing to say, Edmund. But papa loved me so! It would have grieved him to the soul could he have foreseen this hour for me. Until this moment I have not felt how terribly friendless and alone I am! Alone—alone!"

She dwelt on the word with a terrible despair. Mr. Chessom was not unmoved by her emotion, but he hastened to say:

"You will not be alone, Dora. I would not permit one so young and beautiful as you to go out into the world alone. Listen to me. There is a woman over at the Hare and Hounds inn—a patient, sorrowful woman, whose husband and children—all but one child—lie buried in a foreign land. This woman is poor and destitute, and turns to her only surviving child for help and support. This woman is your mother, Dora."

"I have seen her."

"She did not say so. I went to see her last evening, having received a message from her. Of course, Dora, a mother's claims are paramount. Even if it were best for you to remain here, I could not keep her. Neither would I bribe her to go away, as she wished me to do. I never approved my father's course in adopting a poor child out of the streets, as one may say. You see I speak frankly, Dora. But he had a right to do as he pleased, and I have no wish to reflect upon his memory. But with my father's life the whole pretence must end. You will go away with your mother, Dora, and be a support to her declining years."

"But I don't like her," cried Dora. "I don't feel as if she were my mother! I can't have her cold eyes for ever upon me—I can't! I can't! I will go away, Edmund. I will work hard. I'll give half my wages to—that woman, but I can't have her near me."

"Dora!" ejaculated Mr. Chessom in a cold rebuke. "All I ask is to go away by myself," said Dora.

"What you want is an impossibility," said Mr. Chessom, coldly. "I am surprised at you, Dora. If you pay no heed to duty, let me tell you that you are under age, and that your mother is your rightful guardian. You must yield to her authority."

The heat, the rebelliousness, the quick impetuosity all died out of Dora's manner. She became quite calm and still—but it was the calmness and stillness of a profound despair.

"There, that is better," said Mr. Chessom. "You had best resign yourself to the inevitable. I have had a talk with your mother on the subject, and I shall resign you into her care to-morrow morning. It is, I hope, unnecessary for me to remind you that you should adopt a filial attitude towards this poor woman."

"It is unnecessary," exclaimed Dora, bitterly. "If Mrs. Narr is my mother, the law is on her side, and I must go with her. But the law can't make me like her."

"Dora!" again ejaculated Mr. Chessom, rebukingly. "I am shocked at your rebellious spirit."

He sighed, and walked back and forth in a perturbed manner.

"I must leave you to yourself," he said, finally, his face clearing. "You must work out your own destiny, Dora. I have but one thing more to say. You will need some funds until you get settled, and it will be prudent to keep a small sum by you in case of illness. You can take with you all your personal effects, clothing, jewellery, books, and music. Here is the address of the lodging-house keeper, also the address of Miss Coningsby, upon whom you will call without delay. She will expect you. Here also is the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds, all that I shall probably ever give you."

He handed her the addresses, and the bank-notes representing the sum he had mentioned.

Dora hesitated about accepting them, but finally drew out her already well-filled purse, and placed in it the additional notes, saying proudly:

"I take the money, Edmund, but not as from you. Papa intended to provide for me, and I take this as my right. It is only a small part of what he intended to give me."

Mr. Chessom's face flushed, but he made no response.

"I can pack up my things in a couple of hours," continued Dora, "and I shall then be ready to go, if you will kindly send me to the station. Mrs. Narr can meet me there. I don't want to see her this side the station."

"You had better wait till to-morrow, Dora."

"No; I cannot stay. I thank you for your civility, Mr. Chessom, but I shall feel better to go."

"Perhaps it would be as well, then, that you should go. Still, you are quite welcome to stay till to-morrow. The carriage will be at the door in two hours from now. I will send word to Mrs. Narr immediately, so that she may be waiting for you at Horsham. After all, I am not sure that you are doing well in going off so abruptly. Many of the neighbours will call to-day, and explanations would be very disagreeable for you. We part friends, do we not, Dora?"

"I suppose so," said Dora, drearily. "I have forgotten what friendship means."

"I will not see you again. Partings are always disagreeable. I hope you will prosper in your new vocation. Good-bye, Dora."

He touched her cold hand lightly, as the girl arose, and paused a moment on her way to the door.

"Good-bye!" echoed Dora, faintly.

She tottered to the door, and halted on the threshold for a last look at the room, endeared to her by so many pleasant scenes, hallowed to her by the squire's sudden death within its walls. A last long look—and then Dora went up to her room.

When the carriage came to the door, two hours later, Dora, deeply veiled and clad in mourning garb, descended the stairs ready for departure.

The old family servants, who had been informed by Mr. Chessom that Dora had been only an adopted child of the Chessoms, and was now going away with her own mother, crowded around her with tears and sobs.

There was a brief scene, and then Dora got into the carriage, the trunks were strapped into place, and the next moment the young girl was leaving behind her the dear old Grange, with all its tender memories and pleasant associations.

She sank back in the corner of the carriage, pulling her veil over her face, and weeping silently.

Only once on the way to Horsham did she arouse herself, and that was when they drove past Weir Hall, the home of young Mr. Weir. Then she started up, and looked eagerly at the stately mansion and pleasant grounds, but the young squire was not visible, and she sank back, with a half-uttered moan on her lips.

The journey to Horsham was in due time accomplished. Dora was driven directly to the station—a train being on the point of departure.

Mrs. Narr was waiting on the platform, and came forward to greet the young girl, but Dora quietly repelled her embrace, and greeted her with cold politeness. For her life, she could not have welcomed her warmly.

Mrs. Narr's face clouded, and she was about to rebuke Dora, or to reproach her, when the train glided into the station.

Then came the bustle of departure, and soon after Dora was speeding on her way to London, in company with the woman whose maternal claims her heart rejected, yet alone, terribly alone! The battle of life was before her. Would she perish in it, or come off conqueror? What would be her fate?

#### CHAPTER VIII.

THE week succeeding Felix Wamer's arrival brought several changes to the party at the Saltair Manor.

The guests of the Lady Barbara departed, well pleased with their visit—the Ladies Howe returning to their home, and Mr. Tillinghast accompanying Willard Ames to London.

The engagement of the latter to Miss Gower had been announced, and the marriage had been arranged to take place in September.

The fair Ada had summoned a dressmaker from London, and was already deep in the mysteries of a bridal outfit, for the Lady Barbara was queenly in her generosity to her niece.

A silence that was almost gloom had, therefore, succeeded to the recent gaiety at the Manor.

The Lady Barbara remained in her own rooms most of the time, coming forth only to her meals.

Miss Gower being equally invisible, Lord Champney and Felix Wamer had but a dull time of it, and the latter would have gone back to Sussex, but that he dared not leave the unreconciled husband and wife alone together, lest they should undo all his evil work of years by resuming their former relations to each other.

No circumstance had occurred during the week to feed the aroused jealousy of Lord Champney, who, moody and unrestful, spent half his time in sailing on the neighbouring waters in a gay little pleasure yacht belonging to the Lady Barbara.

One afternoon—it was the day after Dora's departure from the Grange—Felix Wamer was walking in the shade along the terrace by the sea, deeply absorbed in thought.

Afar off on the bright waters a white sail was dimly visible, the sail of Lord Champney, whose boat was tossing lazily on the white crests of the dancing waves.

"I am tired of this dull, fish-like existence!" muttered Wamer, impatiently. "If it were not that, as somebody or other says, 'eternal vigilance is the price of liberty,' and of position, I would run down for a peep at my bright little Dora! Saucy little witch! I wonder how she bears my absence!"

A complacent smile gathered about his lips.

At this juncture a servant came out to him, bringing a letter.

"The post-bag has just come, sir," he said, as he delivered it.

Wamer took it, turned it over, and hastily tore it open.

It was a letter from Dora, written after her interview with Mr. Chessom and before she left the Grange, and posted by the coachman who had driven her to Horsham.

"Let's see what the little love says," muttered Wamer, as the servant retreated. "Had to write to me. I'm a lucky man to win the heart of the lovely little heiress. Good blood those Chessoms! Ah!"

He stared blankly at the delicately-written page, as if unable to comprehend the meaning of the words upon it.

Yet it was a simple little letter. In it Dora told him frankly that she prized the love which he had declared for her, but in a tender, pitiful fashion she offered him back his freedom. There were tear blots all down the page where she told him that the good old squire was dead and buried, that she herself had been but his adopted child, that he had, without meaning to do so, left her penniless, that Edmund Chessom had cast her off, and that, as she wrote, she was on the point of going away with her own mother to a life of poverty, toil, and obscurity. And so, not being in position or wealth anything like his equal, Dora offered to release him.

Yet through the whole letter, despite its purport, was plainly perceptible Dora's secret faith that he would be true to her, and that he would come for her and make her his own.

"Was ever any one tried like I am?" muttered Wamer, leaning against the balustrade and winding the letter about his fingers. Old Mr. Chessom dead! Dora not his daughter! Poor and penniless! And a vulgar old tramp claiming her! This is incredible! Can the girl be trying my disinterestedness? No; she is only too sincere, that's evident."

He pulled at his long, tawny whisker, as he always did when puzzled or troubled, and read the letter again.

"I was ready to marry a Chessom," he said to himself. "A suitable dowry would go far to level all social distinctions between the Chessoms and me—but the poverty-stricken daughter of a pair of vagrants! The saints defend me! What a mother-in-law the old creature would be! I should have to make her an inmate of my house, or ruin myself in paying subsidies to her in the shape of black mail. What am I to do? I cannot give her up. I never loved a woman as I love her. And I cannot marry her—at least, not to acknowledge her. Is there no way to compromise in the shape of a secret marriage, or an alliance of an irregular description? I must think the matter over. As soon as I can, I will go to Dora; but it won't hurt her to feel her loneliness and helplessness first. I will seem like an angel of light to her when I do come."

He was meditating deeply, bold and villainous schemes springing into being in his fertile brain, when he heard a step on the terrace behind him.

Turning, he beheld the Lady Barbara, a small spy-glass in her hand.

"I came out for the sea-breeze, and to look at the fisher's sails," remarked the Lady Barbara. "You look pale and troubled, Mr. Wamer. I hope your letter did not bring you bad news."

"The worst of news, Lady Barbara," said Wamer, "I have a letter from the lady I am engaged to marry. But read it yourself," he added, handing

it to her. "I should like the sympathy of a friend, and such I hope you are, Lady Barbara."

His manner, at once deprecating and distressful, won the Lady Barbara's interested attention. She laid down her spy-glass on the top of the stone balustrade, but would have declined reading the letter, only that Wamer thrust it into her hands.

"Please read it," he urged. "And tell me what you think."

Thus entreated, the Lady Barbara read the letter. Before she had reached its close, her tears were dropping beside Dora's on the page.

"A sad story!" she said. "The writer of that letter is worth knowing, Mr. Wamer. She is a brave and noble girl. And she loves you?"

There was an unintentional surprise in the question, as if the fact were marvellous to her ladyship. Wamer winced under the sarcasm.

"You can judge for yourself from her letter."

"And you love her?"

"As I never loved before—as I never expected to love. That girl has my heart in her keeping."

"And you will marry her, Mr. Wamer, despite the coarse, vagrant mother, and what other disreputable relatives she may have?"

"Certainly," ejaculated Wamer. "I love her, Lady Barbara. Dora is the same girl she was last week when I offered her my hand. I shall be true to my engagement, and shall make her my wife."

The Lady Barbara studied Wamer's face with a keen scrutiny. He met her gaze fully, openly, and frankly, with a simulated honesty that completely deceived her.

"I have wronged you in my thoughts, Mr. Wamer," said the lady, at length. "Forgive me. You are better than I thought."

She held out her hand, and Wamer took it, pressing it fervently, even while he looked away smiling.

He was a master of the art of deceit. He had not yet made up his mind what course he should pursue in regard to Dora, except that he should not relinquish her, but he had persuaded the Lady Barbara that under all his faults he had a true, honest, and uncorrupted heart.

"Your noble confession atones for any wrong you may have done me in your thoughts, Lady Barbara," he said. "As you know me better, you will do me better justice. You have no better friend than I am. Sidney might tell you, if he would, how I have pleaded with him to heal this miserable breach between you two, so formed for each other."

The Lady Barbara's face whitened with a sudden haughtiness.

"Let us be friends, Barbara!" Wamer exclaimed.

"Friends!" repeated the lady, with bitterness. "Are you sure that you know what the word means?"

"I do not comprehend you, Lady Barbara!"

"No! For years I have suspected you of being secretly my enemy, Felix Wamer. For years I have believed that it was you who crept like a serpent between me and my husband, poisoning our lives. Wait! Hear me out! Someone must have fostered Sidney's wicked jealousy, and I could suspect no one but you, for no one else would profit by our dissensions and separations. Sidney is too noble to have stayed away from me so long, but for some one's influence. You were brought up with your cousin. He loves you. He trusts you. He never has suspected your faith as he has suspected mine. Now, tell me, Felix, have you ever used your influence with him to my detriment? Is it you I have to thank for my years of actual widowhood?"

"These are strange questions, Lady Barbara."

"Then you refuse to answer them?"

"Refuse! No. To the contrary, I hasten to answer them by declaring that never so much as by word or look have I striven to prejudice Sidney against you. He will tell you that I have always praised you, always defended you. Do you doubt me now, Lady Barbara?"

He met her scrutiny with a strangely steadfast look, a smile on his lips. His face was all innocence and distress at having been so misjudged.

The Lady Barbara, keen as she was, was completely deceived. She had never had evidence of any double-dealing on his part, and now blushed at what she deemed the injustice and absurdity of her recent suspicions.

"We will be friends, Mr. Wamer," she said, quietly. "We will understand each other at last."

She turned her gaze seaward, as a riotous breeze lifted the long curl of pale gold that strayed over her shoulder.

"Lord Champney is coming back!" she exclaimed, marking the growing nearness of the white sail.

"Yes," said Wamer, his gaze following hers.

"Lady Barbara, as your friend and his, let me try to reconcile you two, both so noble, both so proud and relentless. Let me be the mediator who shall clasp your hands together in love and kindness."

A sudden agitation shook the Lady Barbara's frame.

"Did he tell you to say this to me?" she cried, her voice tremulous with a great eagerness. "Did he commission you to sound my heart?"

Wamer shook his head in seeming sorrow.

"No, Lady Barbara. He is too proud—poor Sidney! I have pleaded with him every day since I came here to reconcile himself with you, but he refuses me. He says—"

Wamer checked himself abruptly, as if he had spoken inadvertently.

"Well," what does he say?" demanded the lady.

"I should not have said so much, Lady Barbara!"

"Having said so much, I command you to go out!"

"Since you command, I obey. Lord Champney says that when you swear to him that your heart has never swerved from him, and when you apologise for all your waywardness, he will take you back again. Until then he will remain your jailer."

The small proud head crested itself laughingly on the slender throat. The dark eyes flashed with the fire of a haughty and unscrupled spirit.

"This of me!" she cried. "Lord Champney little knows me! I, the injured, to humble myself to him! I to swear to my innocence; I to crave his pardon! Never, never!"

"Yet you love him?" insinuated the hypocrite.

The proud head drooped suddenly. The pale cheeks flushed with a sudden carmine. The eyes brimmed over with a rare and glorious tenderness, in which were both anguish and self-contempt.

For a moment the Lady Barbara's soul, pure, passionate, and impulsive, seemed to lay bare before this man's eyes. He knew then that, under all her pride and bitterness, she loved her husband even as her husband loved her!

And, knowing this, he resolved in his soul to stand between the two thenceforward like a flaming sword, for his happiness and prosperity he assured himself must be built upon their misery and ruin.

They stood a little while watching the boat come nearer and nearer, and then Wamer said gently:

"Lady Barbara, is it all well between us? You do not blame me?"

"No, Mr. Wamer. I blame no one. I think, after Ada marries, I'll go abroad alone for a while. I shall not be able to endure this sort of life for ever!" and she put her hand to her heart as if to stifle a pain.

"How near Lord Champney is now!" said her ladyship, after a little. "I do not care to meet him Mr. Wamer. I'll go back to my rooms."

Wamer made no effort to detain her, and she moved slowly towards the mansion.

When she had disappeared within the portal, Wamer, smiling, descended the stairs, which were cut in the side of the rock, and which led to the sea.

At the foot of this rude staircase, which was protected by a stout rail on its outer side, was a long stone pier, at whose further extremity, surrounded by water, was built the gay little boat-house to which reference has already been made.

Wamer made his way out along the pier to the boat-house, and opened wide the great doors, that the little yacht might glide into her safe haven.

Then he waited on the pier until Lord Champney, flushed with the sea-breeze and with exercise, sailed into the little bay, and approached the boat-house leisurely.

"Back again, at last?" he cried. "You were a long time out. We've been watching you."

"That was Barbara with you on the cliff?" asked Lord Champney, as he lowered sail.

"Yes, it was the Lady Barbara. She went in as you came near. She said she did not want to meet you. It is strange, Sidney, that she dislikes you so much. I can't comprehend it."

"I can," said his lordship, moodily. "So she fled at sight of me? Lend me a hand, Felix, to get the boat in. So! Easy now! There she glides!"

The boat slipped into her shelter, and Lord Champney sprang out upon the steps.

"Did you have a pleasant sail?" asked Wamer.

"Yes—no! How's a man to enjoy himself when he's not right at heart? I carried myself with me, and I'm not the best of company for myself, Felix. Let us go in."

He wiped the perspiration from his heated brows, and led the way up the rocky stairs with a swinging step.

On gaining the plateau above, he halted in the shade until Wamer joined him, and the two then proceeded towards the house.

At the same moment a man appeared, riding up the avenue from the lodge, at a swift pace.

"A messenger!" suggested Wamer, half halting.

"Nonsense. Don't you see he carries a basket? One of the servants who has been to market, most likely."

"It's not one of Lady Barbara's servants," declared Wamer, with a positive air. "The fellow wears a green and gold livery. The servant of some friend of the Lady Barbara, or of Miss Gower."

They walked on, reaching the porch just as a servant came out in response to the call of the liveried houseman.

"A bouquet for the Lady Barbara," said the stranger, opening the basket, and lifting out from a bed of cool green mosses a magnificent bouquet.

He gave the bouquet into the servant's hand and retired swiftly as he had come.

"How lovely!" cried Wamer, pausing to look at the exquisite combination of rare blossoms. "The perfume is delicious! They are a fit offering for the Lady Barbara!"

"They are magnificent!" said Lord Champney, glancing at them. "Some greenhouse has been spoiled to-day!"

"Just smell them," said Wamer, laying the bouquet in his lordship's hand.

Lord Champney smiled and buried his hot face in the cool and dewy blossoms.

"The odour is almost intoxicating!" he said.

He was about to return the bouquet to the servant and pass on his way, when his quick eye detected, hidden among the flowers, a tiny note.

He started as if a serpent had stung him.

"What is it?" demanded Wamer.

"Nothing, nothing!" said Lord Champney, in an altered voice and in a constrained manner. "A strange pain at my heart, Felix—nothing more."

"It may have been the odour of the flowers. It affects some people unpleasantly. Let the man take them to his mistress."

"Where is the Lady Barbara?" asked his lordship.

"In her room, my lord," answered the servant.

"Very well. I will convey the flowers to her," exclaimed Lord Champney.

With his face flushed to an unnatural redness—with his lips firmly compressed, and his eyes blazing with his fierce, unleashed passions, Lord Champney stalked along the corridor, mounted the stairs, and strode towards the private apartment of his wife, the bouquet held out at arm's length before him.

(To be continued.)

## LEIGHTON HALL.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

For an instant John's heart throbbed quickly as a wave of the past came over him at sight of the girl he had loved and lost, but Maude's pretty, saucy speeches were ringing in his ears, and his hand still burned with the touch of the soft, warm fingers, which had so deftly and so gently extracted an ugly silver from his thumb, just before leaving Oakwood, and so the wave of memory passed harmlessly over him; and when Roy, who with Georgie was looking at and discussing the little figure in gray, whom Maude was still caressing, said to him:

"Can that be Miss Overton?" he answered, "Yes, that is Miss Overton."

Roy hastened his movements then, and ere Edna knew well what she was about, he was shaking her hand, and looking down upon her in a curious way.

It was Maude who introduced her as "Miss Overton, my friend," and all bowed politely to her, while Georgie, following Roy's example, took her hand and stood a moment looking at her, as if trying to solve some doubt or mystery. Maude, who was watching her, and saw the look of perplexity on her face, whispered, under her breath, "Old rascal, what if she should recognise her!"

But if to Georgie there had come any faint remembrance of that awful night of the catastrophe, and the little stunned, bewildered creature, whose eyes had in them such a look of hopelessness and terror, she put it away for the time being, and gave no sign of what was passing in her mind.

They were very gay during dinner; and Edna, whose spirits brightened and expanded in the atmosphere of kindness and good breeding, joined in the gaiety; and her sweet-toned voice and silvery laugh at some of Maude's queer sayings reached Mrs. Churchill's ear more than once, and made her at last speak of the stranger to Georgie.

"That Miss Overton has a very musical voice," she said; and Georgie, whose ear had been constantly turned in the direction of Edna, and who, without seeming to notice, knew exactly when Roy spoke to her, and how much attention he was paying to her, answered indifferently:

"Yes, very much like a child's voice. She seems a child, too; at least in size."

"Isn't she very pretty? I fancied so, as nearly as I could judge," was Mrs. Churchill's next remark; and Georgie replied:

"Yes, very pretty, some would think, though rather too small and petite to impress one very strongly. There is something familiar in her face; and I should say she looked a little, yes, a good deal, like Mrs. Charlie Churchill."

"Oh, I'm glad," and Mrs. Churchill's hands



made a little rattling among the china and silver, while Mrs. Churchill's heart went out still more kindly toward the young girl who resembled Charlie's wife.

Georgie had not intended such a result, and after her shot was fired and she saw the effect, she bit her lip in vexation, but said no more of Miss Overton or her resemblance to Edna Churchill. As if inspired with some new idea, she was very gracious to Edna. After the dinner was over and they had returned to the drawing-room, inviting her to a seat beside herself on a little divan apart from the rest, she was very sociable and familiar, and questioned Edna with regard to her journey and her home. Had she always lived there, and was it not such a charming place, with such delightful scenery?

"No, I have not always lived there. I was born in Devonshire, and lived there till my father died," Edna replied, fully alive to the danger of letting her interrogator too much into the history of her past life, and with a dread suspicion that Georgie was really drawing her out.

But the home in Devonshire threw Georgie off the track, and ere she could resume it again Maude came to the rescue, bringing Roy with her, and urging Edna to favour them with some music.

"I have told Mr. Leighton how divinely you sing," Maude said, "and he is anxious to judge for himself; so, please, Doty, don't refuse."

If Roy Leighton requested her to sing, it was not for her to refuse, Edna thought; and so when he, too, seconded Maude's request, and offered to lead her to the piano, she arose, and taking his arm walked the whole length of the long drawing-room to the little alcove, or bay-window, where the piano was standing. There was a mist before her eyes and a visible trembling of her hands as she took her seat upon the stool; and then, by way of gaining time, pretended to turn over the sheets of music, as if in quest of something familiar. But when Roy, who saw her agitation, bent over, and said so kindly and reassuringly:

"Don't be afraid, Miss Overton. You have not a critical audience," she felt her courage coming back, and her voice, which, as she began to sing, trembled a very little, soon gained strength and confidence, until it filled the room with such rich melody as held every listener silent, and made Mrs. Churchill brush away a tear or two; for the sweet, touching music made her think of Charlie and his lonely grave. Edna was not permitted to stop with one song, but sang piece after piece, until thoughtful Roy interfered in her behalf, and said it was wrong to urge her further when he knew how tired she must be.

"Not that I could not listen to you all night, but it would be the fable of the boys and the frogs over again," he said, as he led her from the piano, and deposited her at his mother's side.

"You have given me a great deal of pleasure, Miss Overton," Mrs. Churchill said; "and I thank you for it. I am very fond of music, that is, of singing; and you have so sweet a voice. I shall often make demands upon it. I am glad you are here."

Mrs. Churchill, who seldom did anything by halves, had conceived a strong liking for her little companion; and her "I am glad you are here," was so hearty and sincere, that Edna felt her eyes filling with tears, and wondered how she could ever have thought otherwise than kindly of this woman at her side.

Meantime, at the farther end of the room, Roy and Georgie were discussing the stranger and her style of singing.

"The sweetest voice I ever heard," Roy said; "and I am glad, for it will afford mother so much pleasure. I remember how delightedly she used to listen to poor Charlie's performance on his guitar when it almost drove me crazy."

"And that reminds me," said Georgie, "that Miss Overton looks a little like Charlie's wife. Indeed, the resemblance struck me at first as very strong. Wouldn't it be a funny joke if it were Charlie's wife in disguise?"

"A joke I should hardly relish," Roy replied; "for why should Edna come here in disguise when she knows the door stands open to her at any time?"

There was a lurking demon of evil in Georgie's black eyes as they rested upon Edna, sitting so quietly at Mrs. Churchill's side, and looking so young, and fresh, and innocent; and as she saw that her remark had awakened no suspicion in Roy's mind, she beckoned John to her side, and asked him in Roy's hearing if Miss Overton did not resemble Mrs. Charlie Churchill enough to be her sister.

"Why, no," John replied, running his fingers through his hair, and looking across at Edna. "I should not say she was her sister at all; and still, now you speak of it, there is something in the expression of Miss Overton's mouth and eyes like Mrs. Churchill's, only not quite so sad and pitiful."

John spoke naturally enough, and met his sister's eyes without flinching, but invariably he chafed like a young tiger, and when next he found himself alone with Maude, he said to her:

"Maude, Georgie has got something in her mind which may mean mischief to Edna; and if she questions you, as she probably will, and presses you too close, tell her—" John hesitated a moment, and then continued: "Tell her that if she does not want her secret divulged to Roy Leighton, she must respect the secret of others; in short, keep her tongue between her teeth."

Maude nodded understandingly, while her mental comment was, "I knew there was something about Georgie. I was sure of it; and some time I'll find it out."

While this little by-play was going on, Roy had walked to a point in the room from which he could study Edna's face without being himself observed by her. Georgie's remark had awakened no suspicion; he only felt more interested in one said to resemble his unknown sister-in-law, and he stood for several minutes looking at the young girl, and mentally comparing her face with the one casually seen in the train two and a half years ago. Whether there were a resemblance or not he could not tell, for the face of the girl who had so sadly caricatured him and styled him a Betty, was not very distinct in his mind. Edna was very small and so was Miss Overton, but he did not think his sister could be as beautiful as this girl, who had about her a nameless fascination, and whose movements he watched so closely. He had not expected anything quite so fair and lovely in Miss Overton, and when at last, at a whispered word from his mother, she rose and led that lady from the room, he felt as if the brightness of the evening was suddenly clouded, and something lost from his enjoyment.

Mrs. Churchill's exit from the room was soon followed by the departure of the young people from Oakwood, and Roy was left alone, his thoughts more upon his mother's companion than upon poor Georgie, whose star seemed to be waning, and whose heart, in spite of the lightness of her words and manner, as she walked back to Oakwood, was throbbing with a feeling nearly akin to hatred for the so-called Miss Overton, whom she knew to be Charlie Churchill's widow.

(To be continued.)

## THE FALSE LOVER.

GERARD MAYWORTH lay in the shadow of the great maples, watching the little figure wending its way across the field. It came nearer, and closing the book he had been reading, he half raised himself from his recumbent position to get a better view of her.

Short brown curls gave a piquant expression to the fresh, sparkling face, whose red lips softly carolled little snatches of song; while one round dimpled arm and hand curved themselves upwards, and balanced on the curly head a shining tin pail filled with sparkling water from the spring below.

He knew that she was a sort of upper-servant in Squire Maple's family, where she had been brought up from a little girl, and he himself was betrothed to Marguerite Maple, the squire's only daughter. He knew, too, that his admiration for the artless little Madge was wrong, very wrong, and stately Marguerite would open wide her proud black eyes did she ever dream of it. At the thought he darted a stealthy, searching look towards the windows of the great white house surrounded by the tall trees in whose shadows he lay concealed, and then called out:

"Come here, Madge; I must have a drink of that nice fresh water."

She turned at the sound of his voice, and the blushes came and went as she advanced shyly towards him, and with a quick, graceful movement she swung the pail downward, and placed it beside him. One more searching glance towards the house, and his eyes looked admiringly into her own as he said, laughingly:

"Here is the water, Miss Madge, but how am I to drink it?"

The blushes were yet more vivid as she murmured a half apology, and started off for a glass.

"You need not take the trouble, little one; I can find something here that will do just as well."

And drawing her back, he fashioned an odd-looking cup out of the hanging maple leaves, making comical efforts to procure a drink, for the sake of listening to the arch, rippling laugh that lighted up the nut-brown eyes and pealed from between the parted lips at his repeated failures.

She thought him very handsome as he stood there, his hair falling in clustering rings on his white forehead as he bent over the pail, his blue eyes glancing every moment into hers with a merry affectation of dismay at his poor success.

He at last assured her that he had had sufficient, and when she would have raised the pail to return to the house, he determined to brave even Marguerite's pride, and carry it himself; for he had grown strangely careful of the little brown hands of late. But the girl had a finer and truer sense of their respective positions than himself; for she shrank from his outstretched hand with a low murmured:

"If you please, Mr. Mayworth, I would rather carry it myself."

He took no notice of the timid words, or the questioning eyes raised to his, but lifted the pail from her hand without a word, wondering as the sharp handle lined itself on his white palm, how that little figure could support the heavy weight. She made no motion to follow him, but stood still and silent; returning to her side, he said, looking down into her face:

"Madge, why do you not wish me to carry it; are you afraid that I will do too much for you? If so, see, I will take my payment now;" and bending down, he pressed a daring kiss on her lips.

She drew her little figure up proudly, and the look of scorn she bent upon him was worthy of even the squire's stately daughter, as she moved away, leaving the mortified young man standing there, more humiliated by that silent rebuke than he could have been by the most passionate expressions of anger.

He raised the pail and followed her, feeling that nothing would be too mortifying if it would only assure her of his heart-felt contrition. An old female domestic was the only person that greeted him as he opened the kitchen door, and he had the full benefit of her surprised glances as he deposited his burden without a word.

A half hour afterwards he saw Madge pass the door, and though he felt assured that she must know of his close vicinity, she did not even deign to glance toward him.

As he sat there, almost hating himself for his blind folly, a white arm stole round his neck, and Marguerite Maple's love-lit face looked into his own. He pressed a tender kiss on her fair brow, and drew her to a seat beside him. Sitting there in the summer twilight with Marguerite's hand clasped in his, and Marguerite's eyes looking into his own, he forgot his interest in the little girl who had so unexpectedly resented his audacity.

He had met Marguerite in town the year previous, and charmed by her grace and beauty, he had solicited her to become his wife; and obtaining the assurance of her love, he had followed her to her country home to gain the sanction of her father.

The squire, who placed entire confidence in his daughter's judgment, and who was from the first prepossessed in her lover's favour, readily gave his consent to their union, and since then affairs had glided smoothly on, save when an occasional lover's quarrel marred their even harmony.

The disposition of Mayworth was haughty and unyielding, but Marguerite was equally so; and it chafed him to think that he was sometimes compelled to subjugate his will to another, even though that other was the woman whom he had asked to be his wife.

In the days of estrangement Marguerite would realise with aching heart that her disposition was totally unfitted to mate with his; he needed a gentle, yielding wife, who would rely on his judgment unquestioningly, and such she could never be. But a loving reconciliation would banish all such unpleasant misgivings; and every week saw a couple of its days spent by Gerard at the squire's old farmhouse, where pretty Madge, with her bright, winning face, always crossed his path.

Since that little episode in the maple grove Madge had avoided him, and he missed her bright face even more than he cared to acknowledge to himself. It was then that Marguerite's cause suffered most; for in his anxiety to express his sorrow and implore her forgiveness for his fault, Madge was almost constantly in his thoughts, and it irritated him to see how persistently she shunned him. But he would not be deceived by her seeming coldness; for he could not blind himself to the deepening flush in the rosy cheek, as she caught his eyes fixed earnestly upon her, nor fail to catch the trembling light in her own, as they met his for one brief instant, reading the interest he had created far better than she did herself; and in the exultation of the thought, he, wealthy and high-born, realised that the squire's little brown-haired servant-maid held a place in his heart that the squire's beautiful daughter had never filled.

With an ardent and impulsive temperament, he was thoroughly selfish; and stiding all manly pleadings for the fair girl whom he had wooed and won, he determined to disregard the sneers of his aristocratic relatives, and win little Madge for his wife.

The opportunity he had so long sought at last



[THE LOVER'S RUSE.]

presented itself. He came face to face with her as she was flying across the lawn, intercepting her passage as he placed himself directly in her path.

"Madge," he spoke low and hurriedly, "there is something I wish to say to you. Wait till your mistress has retired to-night, and then go to the old willow, at the back of the house, and you will find me waiting for you there. Will you promise?"

He was looking at her with eyes that said not "Will you?" but "You will." and, like a bird charmed by a serpent, she stood trembling and uncertain, till his passionate reiteration compelled her assent.

That night when most of the old squire's household had sought their respective apartments, and unsuspecting Marguerite, with a heart full of happiness, had parted from her lover at the foot of the stairs, a little figure wrapped in a large mantle stole cautiously out of the back door, and glided swiftly and silently down the path that led to the old willow. She did not shrink when a tall figure came towards her out of the thick darkness, for the brave little heart would not fear anything from Miss Marguerite's betrothed, who must be like her, good and honourable.

The pure, upturned face, with the light of the stars falling softly upon it, possessed in its perfect trustfulness a talisman that was its surest safeguard; and Gerard Mayworth, with all his faults, would never have brought a blush of shame to a face like that.

There was re-assurance in the low tones that spoke her name, and tender respect in the voice that pleaded forgiveness for the past, and the little heart fluttered wildly as, taking her hand in both of his, he asked her to be his wife. It was so sudden, so unexpected, she could not at first understand; but when he drew her close to him, and looked down into her face, waiting for her answer, she did not think of Marguerite or the great wrong she was

doing her, but let her head rest just where he had placed it, with a feeling of perfect happiness stealing over her. He had said he loved her, and that thought was sufficient to make her forget that she was nothing but Madge Welden, a poor little servant, and he one of fortune's favourites, as far above her as society ever places wealth above poverty. But her love spanned the distance, immeasurable as it seemed, and her first thought was not for that, but for Marguerite; and with a quick, frightened movement, she drew herself away.

He quieted her with loving words, telling her how wrong it would be to marry one he did not love—and Marguerite would not wish it; she would readily give him up when she saw how it was; and trusting little Madge again suffered her head to droop on his shoulder as she listened, thinking all the time how different must be her love from that of her young mistress; she would not want to give him up, not if fifty Miss Marguerites stood in the way; and she clung closer to him at the bare thought.

A sudden flash of light gleamed across the path, and, looking up, they saw that it proceeded from Marguerite's chamber.

"Oh, let me go!" Madge hurriedly exclaimed. "What if she should want me, and I not there?"

And, breaking from his hold, she almost flew up the garden path.

He was at her side as she reached the door, and, opening it softly, the two stood in the wide, old-fashioned kitchen. They did not see the white, shrinking figure that, at the sound of the opening door, crouched, affrighted, into a shadowed recess; so he drew her closely to him, murmuring, tenderly:

"Give me my good-night kiss, Madge; you forgot that when you ran away so fast."

"You will not tire of me when I am your wife, Gerard?"—love had so soon made the term fami-

liar—"when you see how ignorant I am, and Miss Marguerite is so much above me?"

He saw her fear, and his tones throbbled with feeling as he answered:

"Never, darling. You have a true, loving heart, that is more to me than learning. Be always as you are now, little Madge, and you will hold me for ever."

The boon he craved was not denied him then, and her lips murmured a low good-night as she stole softly away. He followed her a moment after, and when the ticking of the old clock was the only sound that broke the silence, another figure glided across the oaken floor, and reached its room just after the others.

Poor Marguerite! The light revealed an ashen face as she sank powerless into a chair. Her head had ached badly; she remembered seeing some camphor in the kitchen closet, and knowing just where to seek it, she had gone for it without a light, and in the quiet darkness had come upon a deeper, life-long pain.

Ah, well! She had been dreaming a beautiful dream, and fate had showed the awakening. It was cruel; but better now than later. And the wretched girl bowed her head in anguish. That night, when the hours had sped far into the morning, and pretty Madge lay buried in happy, dreamful sleep, there was a noise of hurrying feet, and anxious faces flitted through the great house, for its master was dying.

Dr. Fayne hastened over at the imperative summons, to find a score of frightened watchers gathered around the old squire's bedside. At the first entrance of the physician, he desired that all should leave the room save his daughter and Gerard.

"Doctor, I know that I have but a little while to live," and the feeble eyes searched the physician's shaded face, and then rested with a look of fond affection on the kneeling figure of his daughter. "My child, tell Madge I wish to see her; what I have to say is for her as well."

The pallid face was lifted as Marguerite rose to do her father's bidding. She stood at Madge's door waiting for her to appear. A frightened voice had answered the sharp call, and Madge, with clothes loosely thrown on, and a startled look in her brown eyes, stood in the open doorway. She shrank back guiltily when she saw Marguerite's pale face confronting her; for, in her half-awakened state, she imagined that Gerard had told her all, and that she had now come to upbraid her.

Marguerite read something of her thoughts, and despite her deep pain, she looked scornfully down on the timid, shrinking girl, that followed in her footsteps. A moment more and Marguerite knelt in her old place, the squire's withered hand on the head of his motherless, and soon to be fatherless child; and little Madge, left alone, standing in the furthest corner of the room, half blinded by the light and the unexpected scene, where nothing seemed familiar.

The old squire's voice, cheated into momentary strength, rose clear and distinct:

"I need not speak of the years of life made wretched through one base act of the past. I need only tell of one innocent girl dishonoured, a happy home made wretched, and you know my crime. Yonder poor girl has been a living reminder of that one fatal misstep. I speak of this so that you may know her, even at this late day, as my child."

"Marguerite," and his hand strayed tenderly over the bowed head, "forgive your poor father for the weakness that has kept back this confession till the last moment, leaving you to bear the disgrace alone, when he is at rest for ever. I know you are good and upright, my daughter, and I trust to you to see that she shares the fortune I leave to both."

Thus far Gerard had been a silent listener. But roused into anger by the squire's devoted love for one child, that refused to speak a kindly word of sympathy to the one he had brought into a life of shame, he could no longer control his feelings; and without a thought of the shock his words might produce, the rash, impulsive young man strode across the room, and twining one arm around the shrinking figure of Madge, he hotly exclaimed:—

"You have denied her a place in your affections; and your fortune she does not need. I love her and shall make her my wife, giving her an honourable name, and helping her to forget the shame you have heaped upon her!"

The old man raised himself with an expiring effort, and glaring wildly upon the two, he shrieked out:

"My child! my Marguerite! thou, too, art forsaken! Heaven forgive me!" and falling back with a low moan, he was dead!

The first streaks of approaching dawn came dimly into that solemn room, falling with a sickly light on the pale, rigid form of an old man, and the kneeling figure of a young girl, crushed and heart-broken beneath the weight of a double woe.

H. M.





[BEATRIX'S VICTORY.]

## MYSTERY OF THE BLACK DIAMOND.

### CHAPTER XX.

BEATRIX DUDEVANT had promised to ride with Lord Eaglescliffe that very afternoon; and she had set her little white teeth sharply together, while Sparks was dressing her, and vowed that matters should come to a crisis.

Never had she looked more irresistible than when she came tripping down the wide marble stairway, in all the glory of blue habit and floating plumes. Her wide azure eyes were at their brightest and sauciest, between the full dewy lips her pearly teeth flashed constantly in a succession of bewildering smiles, and the little hand that held her jewelled riding-whip had determination in the very way she grasped it.

As the horses dashed up in charge of a groom, Captain Evelyn came forward to assist her to mount, but with a movement of her shoulder like a spoiled child she turned from him.

"I want Lord Eaglescliffe," she said, saucily; "he helps me best."

The earl came forward, with a flushing cheek, a brightening eye. The small, beautiful foot rested an instant in his hand. The perfumed curls floated across his face, as she sprang lightly to the saddle, and let the azure folds of her habit sweep down the milk-white side of her steed.

She was on Lady Violet's horse. She had artfully managed always to ride it, partly because her friend was less likely to go also in such a case, partly because this snowy palfrey accorded with the style she fancied.

"You look like a picture, my dear Bee," his lordship said, as he drew rein beside her. (She had taught him to call her so.)

Beatrice pouted. "When I am Lady Eaglescliffe," she mused, arrogantly, "Violet shall give me this horse; he is much more in my style than in hers."

The earl was not a young man, but he was still handsome, and sat in his saddle like a Centaur.

They rode in silence some distance. Beatrice, who was usually bubbling with laughter and chat, had nothing to say this afternoon, and after several ineffectual attempts at conversation, his lordship became silent also, anxious and wondering as well; as Beatrice meant he should be. At length, as they slowly paced through the leafy aisles of the deep forest beyond The Nest, the earl leaned from his

saddle and dropped one arm lightly about his companion's slender waist.

"My dear little Bee," he pleaded, "will you not tell me what is the matter?"

"Will you keep your arm where it belongs, my lord?" responded the girl, haughtily; "you've got me into a bad enough scrape as it is."

"Scrape! I?" exclaimed the earl, looking so bewildered that his tormentor had some ado to keep from laughing in his face.

"Yes, scrape," she repeated, with decision; "people are talking about me because you—you are so fond of me."

She blushed vividly, not from modesty, or because of the falsehood, but with positive anger, to think that she, the irresistible, should have to lead the way so flatly to the subject she was determined should come under discussion this afternoon.

Lord Eaglescliffe did not utter a word for some moments. He was dumb with amazement, pain, and shame, that his guest, this innocent young creature, should have suffered by his "fondness" for her. But he thrilled at the word.

"Stupid!" thought Beatrice, in a passion, eyeing the silent lord through her curls. "I wish your horse would run away with you!"

Then she spoke sweetly, her golden lashes drooping, her rose lips in a quiver.

"I don't blame you, though I did speak so crossly," she said, with her most childish air. "I have been just as foolish and imprudent as you have. I never learned to conceal my emotions, Lord Eaglescliffe." And she lifted those obedient, speaking eyes of hers to his, in one slow, thrilling gaze, that he could not fail to read.

Ah! what charming naïveté! what engaging frankness! what childlike simplicity! His lordship fairly reeled in his saddle at the revelation that he was beloved—that he had only to extend his hand and pluck this sweet rose of the world to wear in his bosom. It did not occur to him that moment that the sands of his life might run out any hour. One thought, however, withheld him still from speaking the words the desperate beauty longed to hear.

Bethinking herself, in her despair, of woman's last weapon—tears, she suddenly burst into a convulsive passion of weeping, that had not only its intended effect in startling the earl, but caused Zephyr to start also, at an abrupt descent in the road, and his rider was, by the movement, tossed upon the turf.

Miss Dudvant had not so much as a scratch upon her delicate skin, and Zephyr stood gentle as a lamb.

waiting for her to mount him again. But the chance for an effect was one not to be lost.

When Lord Eaglescliffe, in a wild panic, leaped from his horse, and ran to her, she was lying apparently unconscious, her hat fallen off, and her curls tumbled over her face.

"Sweetest!" cried the earl, falling upon the moss beside her. "My own little Bee—have I killed you?"

He caught her up in his strong arms, lavishing kisses on the seemingly inanimate face, as he bore her light form to a spring he heard bubbling near.

Just at the right moment Beatrice opened her eyes, saying to herself:

"He'll be drenching me with that nasty water next!"

She opened her lovely, languid eyes over his lordship's shoulder, glanced once in his face, and nestled to him with a birdlike movement.

That gesture sealed the earl's fate.

"Dear Bee! darling little one!" he said; "I must speak. I promised my dead wife that so long as Violet was unmarried, I would remain so. But I love you, my sweet angel. Dare I ask you to be my wife on such a contingency?"

"Your wife, my lord? I? I, your wife?" exclaimed the arch plotter, her charming face radiant with triumph.

The contingency gave her small anxiety. It would be easy enough marrying Violet to Captain Evelyn, she thought.

To the earl, that beautiful radiance seemed love's own language.

There was a cottage back a little way on the road, and thither the two adjourned, while a man was dispatched to the park for a carriage. Beatrice wished to be sure her chains were irrevocably riveted on his lordship while he was in the mood.

Thus it chanced that in the late summer dusk, these two, the earl and his triumphant betrothed, were riding slowly towards the park, at about the same hour that Captain Evelyn and Lady Violet were in the library holding the interview we have described. The carriage was of the most luxurious description. Beatrice's selfish heart swelled with rapture as she thought: "It is all his, and he is mine," and, lying back among the cushions, she looked into his lordship's infatuated eyes with a glance whose liquid lustre would have turned the head of a stronger, cooler man.

The earl was grave, however, and his gravity deepened as they neared the park.

Lady Violet must be told of the new condition of

affairs, and, everything considered, he began already to feel awkward about telling her.

His pretty, childish companion, on the contrary, was full of exulting conjecture as to how Violet would take it. With all her pretence of fondness for her friend, she would have been willing to make a considerable sacrifice for the sake of once thoroughly humiliating her. The natural nobility of Lady Violet—that queenly nature that in a stuff gown would have made her Beatrix Dudevant's superior—was a continual thorn in the envious side of the London belle.

It was with some effort that she assumed a becoming gravity of demeanour, while Lord Eaglescliffe, having detained her in the drawing-room and sent for Lady Violet, communicated the situation of affairs to his daughter.

When she first entered the room Lady Violet's face had worn a pallor like death, but as the earl spoke, as a realisation of his meaning forced itself upon her, she flushed to the brow. An instant, a passionate anger swelled within her, as a full consciousness of the hypocritical part Beatrix had been playing burst upon her. But, repressing it, she merely bent her head in respectful dignity before her father, whose white hairs were sacred to her, and, without a glance at Miss Dudevant, was quitting the room.

Her father's voice arrested her.

"You have not spoken with Bea, my dear," he said, gently, and with a wistfulness that touched his daughter to the heart.

"Miss Dudevant has my sincere wishes for her happiness in this and every other event of her life," she said, gravely, turning to Beatrix.

But Miss Dudevant, as she met that calm glance, felt that she was despised, herself thoroughly understood and condemned by the proud girl she had hoped to humiliate. She answered, however, sweetly, as usual:

"My own Violet, I knew you would be glad. We are so fond of each other, my lord. Your daughter and I love each other very dearly; don't we, my Vio?"

Lady Violet bowed again and quitted the apartment.

"I shall be Lady Eaglescliffe in spite of her, unless she chooses to stay an old maid to keep me out of it," thought Beatrix, as she danced away to her chambers.

"He has asked me to marry him," she announced to Sparks, triumphantly; "and Lady Violet is mad, of course."

#### CHAPTER XXI.

We left Lady Lowndes and Sir Jamieson waiting for lunch, which came up promptly—an exquisite little repast exquisitely served on antique, nearly priceless old china.

The wine was like molten gold, an exceedingly rare vintage, the baronet explained to Eleanor, which had been presented, a quantity every year, to his mother by an uncle in France. His mother was a Frenchwoman.

"I take it as an encouraging token," he added, cheerfully, "that this wine is sent, because we used always to call it my mother's wine, and the butler must have intended a compliment sending it to her son."

Eleanor smiled indulgently. She was glad to hear him speak in that tone about ever so trifling a matter. Courage was the one thing needful, she argued just now.

Though the last of May, the days were cool enough to make the low blaze in the grate pleasant, and the lunch was a success.

The baronet's handsome, pensive countenance had lightened considerably by the time it was over.

He started slightly when the door-bell rang, but, to his wife's satisfaction, displayed no trepidation. Even Eleanor looked excited when a knock came almost immediately at the door of the boudoir.

It was, however, one of the footmen, with a letter—a somewhat formidable-looking affair, in a large wrapper, with the business card of Messrs. Layton and Dresser, solicitors, stamped in one corner.

The sheet within had the same stamp on the upper margin. Its purport was in a most formal manner to request the presence of their esteemed and honoured client, Sir Jamieson Lowndes, Baronet, at their office on business of the gravest and utmost importance to himself. Nothing but an overpowering and conscientious regard for their esteemed and honoured client's own interests detained Messrs. Layton and Dresser at their offices, pending his arrival.

Lady Lowndes had read so far with her husband looking over with her. She lifted her eyes to his at this moment, in wonder and perplexity.

"What can they want? Something very serious has occurred, without doubt. We must go at once."

Eleanor looked grave and doubtful, as she glanced

back at the mysterious epistle. Her eye caught the word "over," in parenthesis, in the lower right-hand corner of the sheet.

"Stop!" said she, "here is something more," turning the leaf.

There was a postscript which said that, expedition being of the utmost importance, Mr. Layton had taken the liberty to send his own carriage, which happened to be at the door.

"That is very fortunate—very thoughtful really," said Sir Jamieson. "You will go with me, Eleanor?"

But to his astonishment Lady Lowndes laughed scornfully, as she twisted the letter in her fingers.

"My dear husband," she said, "I am very glad to get this letter, because it shows to what desperate expedients our enemies are compelled to resort. I think we will let this important business—this gravest business of Messrs. Layton and Dresser—take care of itself."

"What do you mean?"

"That your lawyers never saw that letter; that it is a vile fabrication to get you into the power of your enemies. If I went with you, so much the better. They could put us both in a madhouse, I suppose, if they had money enough to pay the necessary bribing expenses."

The baronet was pale with amazement and horror. Lady Lowndes turned to the footman, who still stood there.

"The man waits?" she asked.

"Yes, my lady."

She smiled at the "my lady."

"I am sure I can trust you," she said, looking brightly at him.

"Indeed you can, my lady. The most of us have had our doubts. We haven't them any more, thanks to your ladyship, and begging your pardon for saying it."

Sir Jamieson extended his hand impulsively, yet with dignity, and was not ashamed to let the man see the tears that glittered in his eyes.

"Thank you, Rufus," he said. "I ought to have known my father's old servants had their hearts in the right places, if I didn't know how to find them."

Rufus bowed respectfully.

"I should like to see the man who brought this letter," said my lady.

Rufus quitted the room and returned with the messenger, a low-browed, sullen-looking fellow, whose small red eyes avoided Lady Lowndes' penetrating glance persistently.

Eleanor slipped from her finger a ring with a very fine solitaire diamond, a present, her last birthday, from Lady Violet. Showing it to the man, glittering on the palm of her hand, she said:

"Messrs. Layton and Dresser never sent you here. Confess who did send you, and you shall have this ring."

The fellow's greedy eyes fastened on the flashing stone a moment—then he shot her a furtive, cunning look.

"Just say who I shall confess to, and it's all right," he said, cautiously.

"That is answer enough," said Eleanor, coolly returning the ring to her finger. "Sir Jamieson and myself desire you to convey to your mistress our regrets that she should have been to such unnecessary trouble on our account."

The man relapsed into more than his former sullenness.

"Be you going?" he said to the baronet.

Lady Lowndes touched the bell at her elbow.

Rhodes presented himself.

"Conduct this man down," she said, sternly, her eyes flashing with sudden rage; "and when you get him to the door kick him out."

The emissary squared himself for resistance, but Rhodes on one hand and Rufus on the other, collared him and marched him off according to orders. He began to remonstrate before he had gone half-way, but Rhodes shook his head and looked obstinate.

"It'll be only a taste of what your mistress has had served out to her betters," he said, and faithfully executed Lady Lowndes' bidding, when they reached the door.

The afternoon passed, and as it lengthened without bringing madame, or any news from her, Sir Jamieson grew more and more self-confident. By dinner-time he was like an emancipated schoolboy, in the joyous exultation of his countenance.

Eleanor was, secretly, very anxious; but she did not suffer it to appear in her countenance.

Dinner was served in the handsome dining-room, where Sir Jamieson's father had dined before him, and Eleanor sat in the seat his own mother had once occupied.

Thanks to the influence of Lady Lowndes, cautiously brought to bear in that direction, the servants had the air of having served Sir Jamieson there all his life. Everything was in its place, and there a natural look. If anything, the respectfulness,

of those who waited upon the pair was overdone. But neither the baronet nor his lady were inclined to be critical in that respect.

Considering that he had never occupied the head of his own table before, Sir Jamieson behaved admirably.

"Shall I leave you to take your wine alone?" Lady Lowndes asked, rising with smiling ceremony.

Then she drooped into a seat near him, for she saw a lurking shadow gathering on the face that had already grown so dear to her. Only fourteen hours and a little more had passed, and yet it seemed to her she had lived a lifetime.

"I had almost forgotten how my own wine tasted," the baronet said with a pensive smile. "I must have been born with a very small soul to have let my fate conquer me so long."

"So that is the cloud," thought Eleanor. "In spite of all that long and horrible attempt to break his spirit, he shrinks from owing his release to a woman."

She laid her hand gently on his arm.

"You were like a bird whose wings had been kept clipped from the first. You had no opportunity to try your own strength. You are not the first man who has found his manhood through a woman's faith in him."

The large sombre eyes of the baronet turned full upon his wife.

"And you have faith in me, Eleanor, in spite of my ignorance, my inefficiency, my cowardice?"

"You are not really any of these. You will justify yet the most implicit faith women ever held for man—wife ever had for a husband."

The baronet gave her an eloquent glance. As they rose from the table, the pair scarcely noticed the glances of admiration which the servants who had just attended them cast upon each.

They returned slowly, arm-in-arm, to the boudoir, and a little past eight Rufus came tapping at the door.

"She that was Lady Lowndes" (that was his way of putting it) "is in the servants' hall talking them over, and Mr. Fred is with her. But we're all staunch, and them of us that is shaky, Rhodes keeps right to the mark."

"Thank you, Rufus," said my lady, with another of those bright, kindly looks, which, being the language of her own heart, went straight to the hearts of those on whom it fell.

"We are going to the drawing-room for awhile," she added; "if there should be anything new, you may come to us there."

"Had we not better show ourselves to the servants?" asked Sir Jamieson, anxiously. "Madame has so much influence."

"By no means; Rhodes or Rufus will let us know if we are needed. I saw a piano in the drawing-room; shall we go there? Would you like to hear me play?"

The baronet assented, with some hesitating anxiety, though he was passionately fond of music.

They found the piano in excellent tune, and Eleanor's voice proved to be a magnificent one.

Never did a favourite prima-donna exert herself more to sing well—to express what she sang; and those were triumphant notes, peans of victory, jubilant, exulting, which poured from her lips. Her husband forgot even his anxiety in listening to her.

Madame, waging a fruitless contest below, heard and raged inwardly, as Eleanor meant she should.

In the midst Rufus came.

"Rhodes thought you ought to know," he began; "there is a stranger with Mr. Fred, and he's about as good a talker as Mr. Fred's mother is."

"A stranger!" exclaimed Eleanor. "Why didn't you say so at first?"

"He's only just come, my lady, and he says he's a doctor, and he knows all about Sir—Sir Jamieson's complaint."

Eleanor glanced at her husband's face, but his hand concealed it.

"He says," pursued Rufus, "that he's willing to meet Sir Jamieson before them all, and give his honest opinion on the case; and—and I know him, my lady, by the scar on his face. No man ever got a cut like that honestly."

"What is that, Rufus?" demanded Lady Lowndes, with a violent start. "What was that you said about a scar? Describe this doctor; perhaps I know him."

"It's a purple streak, up so," said the man, drawing his hand across his face. "It pulls one of his eyes so he can't shut it."

For her life Eleanor could not have suppressed the cry that broke through her pallid lips:

"It is Conway!" and she turned and laid her trembling hand upon her husband's shoulder. She had been brave as a roused lioness for him; she was a shivering coward before her old peril.

An indescribable change passed over Sir Jamieson's



son's sombre face, as the woman he had already learned to worship leaned heavily upon him and murmured faintly, "Save me."

That manhood, which long oppression had seemed to smother, was only smouldering. It leaped to flame as the creature he loved clung to him, helpless with fright.

"My treasure," he said, bending over her, "I will save you."

He put her in a chair, and moved toward the door, his eyes lit with dauntless resolve, his bearing lofty and assured.

Eleanor clasped her hands.

"Where are you going?"

"To face them," he said. "I'm brave enough now I'm fighting for you. Do you mind being left alone? That man shall not pass the servants' hall without he does it over my body."

Eleanor rose from her chair and sat down again. "I would go with you if I could, but I cannot."

"It is not necessary," said the baronet, in a voice so changed with firmness and spirit that it thrilled his wife through and through.

Had a bombshell fallen suddenly through the ceiling, madame and her coadjutors would not have been so startled than they were by the sudden appearance of this noble gentleman, with Rufus respectfully conducting him.

Rhodes and one or two others ranged along beside him the instant he entered the hall, and he stood and looked beyond his enemies to the rest with a proud and solemn mien, a calm, sad smile. He did not know it, but that moment his resemblance to his dead father, whom many of these had served, struck straight to the hearts of some of those around. He spoke to one of the footmen:

"Will you show these persons out, Wilbur?" he said, quietly, yet with a stately, impressive dignity more than ever like his father.

Madame advanced towards him, leaning upon the arm of the pretended doctor.

"He is very dangerous when he is excited; don't excite him, Wilbur," she said, in a voice of pretended anxiety.

Wilbur stood still. Rhodes and Rufus drew nearer to Sir Jamieson.

The large, melancholy eyes of the baronet turned upon madame with a sudden blaze of awful rage.

"Woman," he said, in the low tones of concentrated passion, "if you do not go this instant, I shall forget that you were ever my father's wife, and remember only my wrongs. I warn you."

Conway—for the pretended doctor was indeed he—began to bluster, but Rhodes came to madame's side.

"He has two loaded pistols under his coat," he said, in a low voice. "Now, if you stay, you can't say you haven't been warned."

Madame's flushed face grew white. She had that instinctive cowardice which is always part of a mean nature. She whispered something in Conway's ear, and together they turned and left the room without a word.

#### CHAPTER XXII.

Nothing could have been softer, more supple, and insinuating than Beatrix Dudevant was now. All her plans had been changed by the discovery that the earl's marriage depended upon Lady Violet's. If she had ever cared for the handsome guardsman seriously, that was all over now, and the sisterly, decorous manner in which she bore herself to him was quite edifying to see.

"Poor Captain Evelyn," she sighed, in Lady Violet's ear, and wound an arm caressingly about her. "How can you treat him so, darling Vio? If anyone had ever cared half so much for me as he does for you, I should have married long ago. Men very seldom love as we do; do they, dear?"

"You ought to know," answered Lady Violet, coolly; "you have tried so many of them."

"Spiteful thing!" thought Beatrix. Then, to Lady Violet, with a soft laugh: "You dear funny tease! Did you say that to change the subject? You needn't think I shall give it up so, and I can tell you if you let Captain Roy go up to London without matters being settled between you, you'll lose him. He's a very popular fellow among ladies, and it is by no means certain he won't be Lord Evelyn yet."

The whole of this speech, which was like many others that had gone before it in kind, was infinitely more offensive in degree to Lady Violet.

Her cheeks burned as she turned towards Beatrix, disengaging herself from her encircling arms, and saying:

"It is time you and I understood each other, Miss Dudevant. Papa's life hangs upon a thread that any serious agitation is liable to snap, or I should say this before him. It is your right, perhaps, to know, that if your becoming Lady Eaglescliffe depends upon my marrying Captain Evelyn, you may as well resign all hope."

Lady Violet was moving haughtily away with the last word. Beatrix began to cry.

"I don't know what makes you talk so to me, Vio? What have I done?"

Lady Violet did not seem to hear her.

Beatrix looked after her sulkily.

"If ever I do get the chance," she said, clenching her small fingers, "I'll pay you, you hateful thing! I'll know what's at the bottom of your airs about Evelyn, too, if I live long enough."

She met Lady Violet with unchanged sweetness at the first opportunity, and though she never ventured to give any more advice, her manoeuvres to bring the two—Captain Evelyn and Lady Violet—together would have tried a less sensitive temper than my lady's, and were the occasion of the ever sanguine and easily uplifted young guardsman being snubbed more mercilessly than ever.

"Pray, sir, are you in league with Miss Dudevant?" Lady Violet demanded, when she found herself constantly paired off with him in spite of herself.

The tawny face of the tall captain (tawny still, in spite of his illness) flushed. The soldierly brown eyes dwelt on her with mingled sadness and hauteur.

"Lady Violet knows as well as I do, that I am incapable of leaguings with any one for the purpose she means. But I should be neither man nor soldier if I neglected any honourable opportunity to try and win her. Please to hear me out, my lady. I shall never cease trying, till either I have won you or am dead. If that is delirium, make the most of it. It's a delirium I hope to die in, at any rate." And with that he made a low bow and marched from the room.

"He deserves that I should tell him the truth, and accept his contempt, but I shan't," was Lady Violet's gloomy yet whimsical comment on what had passed.

Immediately after the receipt of his letter by her father, Lady Violet had written to Conway to warn him, that any betrayal of the true state of affairs to Lord Eaglescliffe should be followed by his arrest at whatever cost. Of course the ex-convict laughed at a threat like that. His communication to the earl had been too vague to do more than frighten Lady Violet, even if her father had read it, but of course she did not know that.

The returned convict divided his time between London, where he prosecuted an ever fruitless search for Eleanor, and the vicinity of Eaglescliffe, where he lay in wait like some ugly spider watching the silly fly his web had entangled.

He eyed the broad Eaglescliffe domains cautiously, and said to himself, "All these may be mine yet. It is only a question of pluck."

He knew that Captain Evelyn was still domesticated at the Cliffe, and vented "curses not loud but deep" on the unconscious guardsman, first for having ever been born, second for persisting in living, and third for being at Eaglescliffe.

It happened that just at this time Malcolm, the earl's valet, fell heir to a small property in Scotland, and abruptly quitted service with his lordship. The advertisement for a new man Conway saw, and was at once seized with a brilliant idea. He would apply for the place, and, in the absence of references, Lady Violet should obtain him the situation. There was only one serious obstacle to this scheme, and that was Eleanor.

He went boldly to the Cliffe, asked for Lady Violet, and sent a sealed note to her.

He waited, standing like a menial in the lofty, palatial apartment styled the great hall, scowling darkly, with envy of the magnificence about him, and nerving himself, for he knew Lady Violet well enough by this time to guess that she would not readily submit to the imposition of his presence there.

While he stood thus, Beatrix Dudevant came down the grand staircase and passed him, eyeing him curiously. She had happened to be with Lady Violet when his note was brought her, and had tripped out ahead of the servant bringing her answer, on purpose to see how he looked.

Conway knew her at once, but she did not recognise him, with his changed looks, and disguised as he was.

The man from Lady Violet was close behind Miss Dudevant.

"My lady will see you," he said to Conway, and took him to the library, where Lady Violet joined him almost instantly, her dark eyes bright with anger.

"Well, what is it now?" she asked, contemptuously. She was at no pains to conceal her scornful passion. "It must be a weighty matter, indeed, that could justify you in forcing yourself on me in this manner."

Conway compressed his lips.

"Patience," he said to himself. "I have always lost my game before by my own rashness. I must be cool and crafty now, if I never was before. Lord Eaglescliffe has advertised for a valet," he said to Lady Violet.

"Well; have you any objections?" queried my lady, sarcastically.

"I want the situation myself."

"You?" incredulously.

"I am too changed for his possible recognition. I can do what will be required of me, and it is at this moment the only possible safety for me. The officers, who are on my track, will hardly search his lordship's private apartments for an escaped felon."

Lady Violet's countenance changed.

"It is a bitter choice between two evils you have left me," she said, after a pause. "I am tempted to confess all to papa, and let you go to your deserts."

"Meaning Australia," responded Conway, coolly. "I happen to know that you dare not do that. Unfortunately his lordship's prejudices are strong. He would never survive the shock of knowing who was likely to reign at Eaglescliffe after him."

Lady Violet's blazing eyes stopped him.

"Never, never, never!" she repeated, in tones of concentrated passion. "The Cliffe shall be levelled to its lowest stone first."

"Overshot myself again," mused Conway, angrily. "I beg your pardon," he said, with affected humility; "that was an unworthy taunt. But really, my lady, you give my forbearance no credit."

"Forbearance," with lingering sparks in her eyes.

"Is it not, in my circumstances, forbearance not to urge my lawful claims on either yourself or his lordship? Yet when I ask a few hours' hiding from a fate worse than death, you turn upon me as though I had hydrophobia."

"A few hours?" questioned Lady Violet, in a milder tone.

"A few days, at most," was the answer.

When the ex-convict quitted the library at last, it was with a lurking smile of triumph. He returned that evening, and was duly installed as valet in Malcolm's place.

Beatrix Dudevant had waited only to see this stranger, whose note had power to make Lady Violet turn pale, enter the library. Then with a book in her hand, she proceeded to a certain vine-shadowed window of the library, and deliberately listened to the conversation we have mentioned.

Lady Violet had cast a hurried glance from this very window upon her entrance, but without seeing Beatrix.

Miss Dudevant's emotions as a listener were varied, her curiosity excited almost beyond endurance, for with all her pains she did not succeed in once learning the name of this stranger, and she only caught fragments of the conversation.

When, however, in the course of the following day, she recognised in the earl's new valet the man she had seen waiting in the great hall, the same she had heard use such incomprehensible language to Lady Violet, she felt she was upon the eve of some important, perhaps terrible discovery.

"I should not wonder if she were secretly married all this time to some one she thinks her father would not approve, and the fellow knows the secret. Her acts show that she is afraid of him," mused Beatrix, furtively watching the earl's new man, whom Lord Eaglescliffe had paused to speak with as they were going out.

She was mistaken, however, in saying that Lady Violet acted as though afraid of him. It was not in reason that she should feel at ease in his presence, but her pale, set face expressed anything but fear.

"What a funny-looking fellow this new valet of yours is, my lord," remarked Beatrix, as the party descended the broad stairs; "don't you think so, Vio love?"

Lady Violet was talking to Captain Evelyn. She affected not to hear; and when the earl called attention, and Beatrix sweetly repeated her remark, she answered quietly that she presumed that his looks would not interfere with the performance of his duties.

"Was he very, very well recommended to you?" asked Beatrix, of the earl, in a lower tone and with great affectation of concern. "I am such a romantic, imaginative creature, my lord," with a little hand on his arm and soft eyes uplifted appealingly; "you won't laugh at me, will you? Was he well recommended?"

The earl smiled as he pressed the little hand, and looked down into the pretty face fondly.

"He brought a letter to my daughter from Eleanor Lyle," he said. "He is exceedingly ugly. I am at a loss to think what food for romance even your fertile imagination can find in so ugly an exterior, sweet Bee."

Bee gave him one of her most caressing glances. "That is just it. He looks as if he might be

somebody in disguise, you know; not at all like a valet."

Lord Eaglescliffe laughed, and that brought down upon him a small shower of pretty pouting, sweet reproaches for laughing at her, and other like charming airs which were the peculiar property of his betrothed.

"He looks like a man that might be bought," mused Beatrix again, as she stood on the western terrace.

The new valet—Turner he called himself—had just passed through the grounds below.

She was in dinner toilette, some gossamer azure fabric which floated cloudily about her, as she descended the steps and moved in the same direction the valet had gone.

As she saw him presently returning, she glanced back at the house nervously and waited directly in his path.

"If he turns off," she thought, "it will prove that he is a real servant; if he keeps on, he is not what he pretends to be."

He kept on, and Beatrix looked him keenly in the eye as he came up.

A sudden light broke in upon her; a conviction so overwhelming as nearly to take her breath away.

"You are Vane Conway," she asserted, daringly, putting herself in front of him. "Yes, you are; I know you, in spite of that horrid streak across your face."

Conway had been on the watch for this possible recognition, though he had guarded against it amply, he thought.

He was quite self-possessed, and assuming an air of utter unconsciousness, said respectfully:

"My name is Turner, miss."

"Indeed it is not," cried Beatrix, excitedly; "it is Conway, you know it is; and if you don't tell me this moment what you are here in this disguise for, I will go straight to his lordship and tell him who you are."

Conway gave her a dark look.

"I should like to strangle you as you stand there," he thought.

"Are you going to tell me?" demanded Beatrix, with a small assumption of imperiousness copied from Lady Violet.

Conway deliberated a moment, scowling so that a quail of momentary terror assailed Miss Dudevant. Then he asked, quietly:

"If I tell you the truth, will you promise not to betray me?"

"Yes."

"I was transported, you know," and with a sneer which she was far from understanding, "I escaped, and I am hiding here till the hue and cry is over."

"Oh!"

Conway knew the temperament he had to deal with. He took a small revolver out of his breast pocket.

"If you betray me," he said, "this!" just showing it, and putting it away again.

Beatrix's rosy colour paled to an awful whiteness.

"You—you wouldn't—" she stammered, beginning to retreat.

"Try me and see," he answered, darkly; and turning into another path, left her to recover her scared wits at her leisure.

"I ought to have made him tell me about Lady Violet. I should if it hadn't been for that horrid pistol," thought Beatrix, as she slowly retraced her steps, pinching her cheeks to bring back the colour which she felt had fled from them. "Can she love him so much as all that, and she so proud a creature, too? If that is so, and she could be induced to marry him, it would be the luckiest thing in the world for me. The earl would be sure to make magnificent settlements in that case, he would be so angry."

She glanced at a tiny watch which was concealed in the handle of the elegant fan she carried—a present from her lordly lover. It lacked an hour yet of dinner. She went straight to Lady Violet's apartments, knocking softly, but with assurance. She knew very well she should not be welcome, but she did not care for that.

Lady Violet was already dressed. She could see the glistening of her white silk dress through the glass doors of the conservatory.

Miss Dudevant floated airily through, and joined her, ignoring with fascinating sweetness the little cloud that rose to my lady's white brow at sight of her. It was no part of her policy to be conscious of the marked distrust which had grown in her friend's mind towards her.

Miss Dudevant's bosom was swelling with the magnitude of the discovery she had made.

"Hateful thing!" she thought, as she glided between the oriental foliage of the conservatory to where Lady Violet stood, leaning dreamily beside a

marble basin into which the water from a fountain trickled musically. "I hate her more for that superior air she puts on sometimes, than I do for anything else, I believe, and—oh! what a lovely dress!" she burst forth aloud.

Lady Violet glanced absently down at the costly, delicate robe.

"Do you like it?" she said.

"Such airs," thought Beatrix. Aloud, she said, lovingly: "Darling Vio, I know now why you do not like Captain Evelyn; why didn't you confide in your own Bee, dear? I'm sure—"

"What are you talking about?" demanded Lady Violet, with some hauteur. "I do like Captain Evelyn."

"But not enough to marry him, you dear, sly creature; ah, I know, and I do say, Vio, you deserve to marry who you like. Such devotion, such faithfulness, such enduring love, I never heard of outside of a book."

"Beatrix Dudevant!" exclaimed my lady, her dark eyes flashing angrily, "what are you talking about?"

"About you," Beatrix said, rather sulkily. "You know well enough—about you and Conway."

"About—me—and—who?" ejaculated Lady Violet, in slow horror.

"Oh, well, you needn't trust me unless you choose; but I know there is something between you and Conway. I know it—and I'd help you if you would let me."

Lady Violet drew a breath of intense relief.

"She knows nothing. She would have gone to my father the first thing if she had known the truth," she thought; and to Beatrix, with a slightly curling lip: "You have a very lively imagination, Beatrix. I cannot pretend to follow its vagaries; but thanks for the offer of assistance, the same as though I was likely to need it."

As Miss Dudevant, with a smile of questionable sweetness, moved slowly away among the tropical-hued blossoms, Lady Violet's eye followed her inquisitively.

"What does she suspect? I shall have to caution Conway again, to avoid all possible recognition by her. Could she have recognised the superscription of his letter to papa, or does she mistrust her Turner is? I never should have known him, even with my reasons for remembering him," and her face darkened again.

She remained some moments buried in profound thought. Then, with a gesture of impatience, she followed Beatrix.

"She can't have guessed the truth, and anything short of that it would be folly to worry about."

As yet, Miss Dudevant did not indeed guess the truth, and she went to dinner with her plotting brain full of small complications which had for their object the entangling of Lady Violet and her lover, as she considered Conway, in a secret marriage.

"I'll just speak to Conway himself about it, and tell him he may depend on my help if he needs it," she said to herself, as she sat at dinner and watched Captain Evelyn's handsome, pale face.

"I'm glad she's not going to marry Evelyn, after all," she pondered, coolly. "I never liked anybody else half so well, and my future lord is well in years, fortunately. It shall go hard but I manage to get magnificent settlements out of him."

If she had guessed what a mine it was in her power to explode! If any of those sitting there had dreamed what mischief was waiting at the very finger-ends of this selfish, frivolous creature, they would scarcely have looked with complaisance, even, on her pretty, false face.

Conway was uneasy about Eleanor. He got leave from the earl, in his new capacity of valet, and went up to London, where, he would have it, she still was.

He had been far enough from guessing, that night, when he served madame by pretending to be a physician, that it was the very woman he was in search of who had just so daringly married the baronet.

He knew her to be a fine musician, and inclined to the belief that she would try to obtain music pupils in a quiet way, or else get a situation as daily governess. His search for her was prosecuted in a slow, systematic way, that could scarcely have failed of success, if Eleanor had been occupied as he supposed.

He never crossed London Bridge without recalling, in a vague, chilly way, the half-threat her letter had held, of flinging herself from it.

It is customary to preserve at the nearest police-station any mementoes of such unknown persons as are fished out of the Thames from time to time, for the purpose of identification by friends.

Some unaccountable impulse led Conway to visit this museum of suicidal souvenirs at this time.

He was conducted into a long, low room, the walls of which were hung conspicuously with various garments, some of them with the thick ooze of the

river yet clinging to them. Articles of jewellery, some of them very costly, were displayed in strong locked cabinets, with thick glass doors.

The ex-convict's glance wandered over the room with mingled curiosity and aversion. Suddenly, he stood still, and his very breath seemed to stop. He had paused before a dress which hung in a remote corner of the room. It was what had been an exceedingly rich pink silk, brocaded in black, in a very singular and beautiful pattern. It was the dress Eleanor Lyle had worn the last time her false and wicked lover saw her.

The woman who attended him took down the dress at his desire; but he shrank strangely from touching it. The smell of the water, which still clung about it, seemed to him like the odour of death.

"Can you tell me how long ago this was?" he demanded, abruptly.

The woman understood him. She showed him the record kept of such particulars. It was three weeks and two days.

"Was the woman who wore this dress young? Describe her to me."

"We has so many, sir; I can't do that. But she had black hair. It is here, sir. We always puts a lock with the dress."

And she showed him, wrapped in one sleeve of the dress, a long, heavy tress of hair. It was black, with here and there a silver thread among it.

The second time he shrank. Bad and reckless as he was, he could not touch that hair shorn from a dead woman's head; and it showed that in his soul some sparks of humanity lingered; that, for the moment, he would have given all the world to know that Eleanor Lyle was alive.

It was but a transient flash of regret, however. Long before he reached Eaglescliffe again, he had begun to look placidly enough on an event which removed from his path so formidable an obstacle as Eleanor Lyle had been.

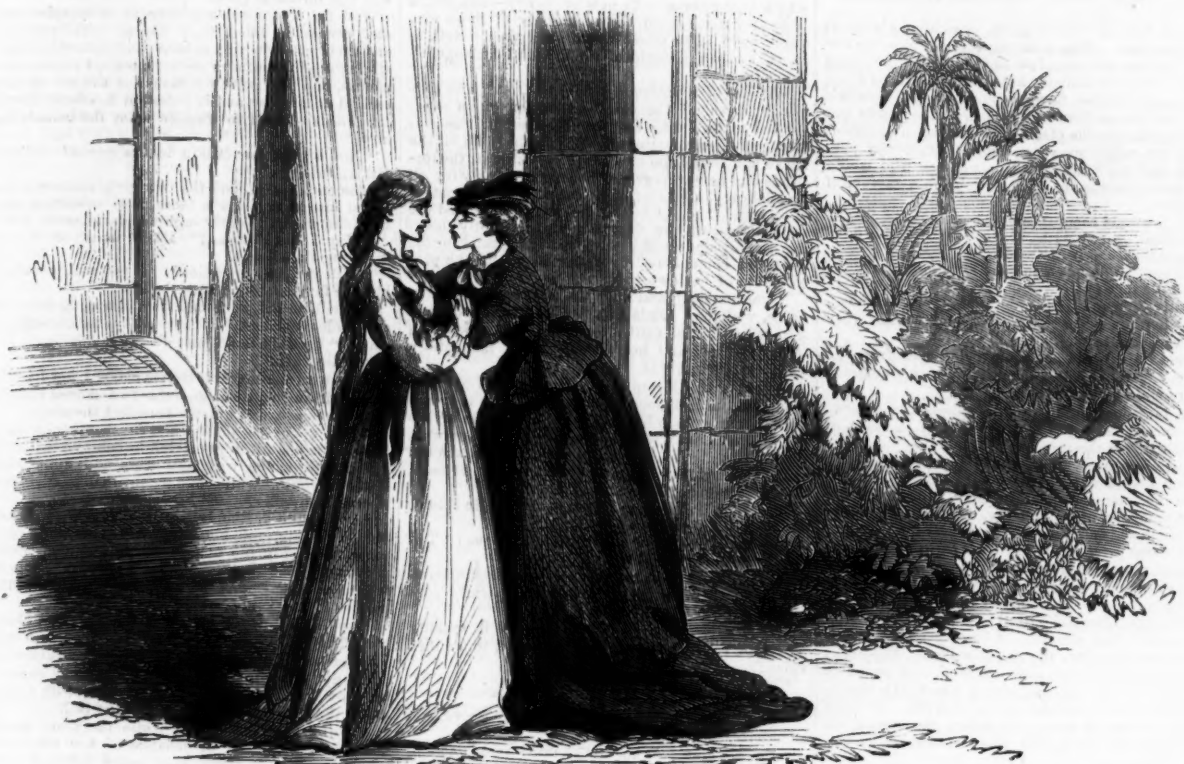
"Only the most improbable of chances can hinder the success of my plans now!" he thought, exultantly; "and any such chance shall perish as this one has."

(To be continued.)

MR. CHARLES DICKENS.—The sale of Mr. Charles Dickens's pictures, drawings, and objects of art, to be held at the rooms of Messrs. Christie and Manson, to-day, will command a special interest, as many of the finest works were presents to the lamented author by the artists. Among the pictures is the celebrated portrait of Mr. Dickens by the late Daniel Maclise, R.A., painted in 1839; 'Dotheboys-Hall,' by T. Webster, R.A.; 'Dolly Varden' and 'Kate Nickleby,' by W. P. Frith, R.A.; 'Pickwick and Mrs. Bardell,' by C. Leslie, R.A.; three splendid works by Clarkson Stanfield, illustrating 'The Frozen Deep,' a portrait of Mr. Dickens in 'Used Up,' by A. Egg, A.R.A.; 'Tilda Price,' by Frank Stone, A.R.A.; 'The Novel' and 'The Play,' by R. Hannah; 'Miss F.'s Aunt,' by W. Gale, &c. The drawings include 'The Britannia,' the vessel in which Mr. Dickens first went to America, by C. Stanfield, R.A.; 'Little Nell's Home' and 'Little Nell's Grave,' by G. Cattermole; 'Little Nell and her Grandfather,' and 'Barnaby Rudge and his Mother,' by F. W. Topham; an illustration to 'The Cottar's Saturday Night,' by Sir David Wilkie, R.A., &c. The 'Silver Pickwick Ladies,' with characters from the work, presented by the publishers, and a splendid collection of bronzes, old Nankin blue and white, and richly enamelled Pekin porcelain, Parisian candelabra, and other decorative objects will be included in the sale.

MOVING A WINDMILL SIXTEEN MILES.—A novel experiment, not quite so sensational as the moving of an hotel at Chicago, but yet something quite out of the ordinary way, has been the removal of a wind flour-mill, with all its fittings, from West-acre to Clenchwarton, Norfolk, a distance of about sixteen miles. The mill was a wooden structure, standing upon wheels. Having been purchased by a man living at Clenchwarton, he determined to endeavour to draw it along the road by a traction engine, but all efforts to find one strong enough proved ineffectual; the application, however, of a powerful steam cultivation engine proved more successful. In passing along the route various expedients had to be tried, such as in ascending a hill the engine proceeded to the summit, and then pulled the mill up with a chain, and so carefully had the task to be performed, that it occupied three days to make the journey. In crossing the Great Eastern Railway at Walton the telegraph wires were broken. In attempting to cross the Ouse it was feared the celebrated long bridge would not be strong enough to bear the enormous weight, but the engine having first passed over, the mill itself was drawn over, the timbers of the bridge in the meantime creaking, and showing that a severe test was being put upon it.





[THE GREAT GRIEF.]

## THE VEILED LADY.

BY THE

Author of "Fairleigh," "The Rival Sisters," &amp;c., &amp;c.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

THE wife of Captain Linwood felt all the anxiety and alarm of a tender and affectionate mother on learning from Senorita Sylvia in reply to her question that Frank had been suddenly seized with fever; and in tremulous tones she conjured Sylvia to tell her more particularly of his present state.

"He is very ill," said Sylvia, with a deep sigh; "he is delirious, and raves continually of vessels, and one in particular—the Falcon, as he calls it."

The husband and wife exchanged glances, and the latter observed:

"I have known the youth for a long time—he is very dear to me, and as you, I am informed, are his sister, you will excuse me if I call you Sylvia. Your face impresses me favourably, and I trust we shall be very good friends."

"Oh, yes," replied Sylvia, warmly. "You have been kind to my brother, and for that alone I should like you, even if your face were not so mild and sweet. Excuse me, but I cannot help speaking thus."

No one could, whose eyes had ever rested for a moment upon the loveable features of the noble Mrs. Linwood.

Mrs. Linwood smiled, clasped Sylvia's hand, and said:

"You are a good, artless child. Now tell me, have you any one who is competent to take care of the youth?"

"I had hardly thought of that," returned Sylvia, "for all our thoughts were centred upon the coming of the doctor; but now I know that we have not: mamma is too nervous, and I am not capable. We shall be obliged to send for some one."

"Pardon me," interrupted Mrs. Linwood, "but I cannot allow a stranger, whose only motive is gain, to watch over him. Do you think your father would object to my nursing him?"

Sylvia's face brightened, and she gratefully responded:

"Object? No, indeed; he will be very glad and thankful, I am sure; but I fear you are making too great a condescension—you may grow weary—"

"Weary? Oh, no; I have taken care of him before this, and it gave me happiness;" and in a low

tone she added, "may this give me as much! Poor Frank."

"I thank you very, very much, dear lady," murmured Sylvia, raising her mild, dark eyes with a glance almost of love, so earnest and tender it was; "for it will be a relief and aid to mamma, and a blessing to us all. But how very negligent I am. Pray remove your apparel, and consider yourself perfectly at home."

Mrs. Linwood complied; and then Sylvia seated herself at her side, and they conversed in regard to the youth.

Presently the doctor entered, accompanied by the Don, who was holding tenaciously to his coat, and asking eager, hurried questions.

As the latter saw his guests he ceased talking, moved slowly forward, and, with a shadowy smile, said:

"Welcome, senior capitaine—welcome, senora, you must pardon my want of politeness, but my heart is heavy and my mind is filled with fear. You know of my son's illness? I am hardly myself in consequence."

"Do not excuse yourself, Don," rejoined the captain; "it is rather my place to do so for coming when sorrow is in your household, but you know my love for the youth, and I could not go away; nay, could not stay away from him even, knowing that he was ill."

"Quite right, capitaine," said the Don; "indeed, I believe every one loves my Enrique, and I am very glad that you have come."

"And, papa," interposed Sylvia, "Mrs. Linwood has kindly offered to take care of Enrique."

"I am very grateful, dear lady," said the Don, turning to Mrs. Linwood, "and I thankfully accept."

"A wise arrangement," observed Senor Reno, "for Mrs. Linwood is known to him, and I think, more than you are, Don, although you imagine him to be your son."

The Don looked from one to the other in painful wonder, and then, fixing his eyes upon Senor Reno, hastily asked:

"Why do you speak thus—do you not believe he is?"

"I have nothing to say," answered the physician, with a shrug of his shoulders, which might imply either doubt or assurance, "you should know better than I."

"But how did you know he ever saw Mrs. Linwood?" pursued the Don, with increasing earnestness.

"Mine host, Largo, told me," replied the doctor, "but that is neither here nor there. Whoever the

youth is, which of course, with all due respect to your opinions, is none of my affairs, he must be cared for and tenderly nursed."

"How was he when you left him?" queried Mrs. Linwood, with loving solicitude beaming from her mild brown eyes.

"He was more quiet," returned Senor Reno. "I left a sedative for him to be taken every two hours. I shall not give him much medicine at present, care and repose are what he needs. His room must be kept nearly dark. You need not be alarmed if he should be delirious, for that at present cannot be altogether avoided."

"And may I see him now?" continued Mrs. Linwood.

"Yes," responded the doctor; "and Sylvia, who exhibits remarkable self-control, I shall constitute assistant nurse."

"Oh, I thank you, senior," exclaimed Sylvia; "I should be very unhappy away from him. I shall be very still, and try to be worthy of your commendation."

"And another thing, Senora Linwood," continued the physician—"unpleasant as it may be to the Don and his wife, I must charge you not to allow them to frequent the sick room. I speak for their interest as well as that of the youth."

"Your directions shall be respected, senior," observed the Don. "I take it upon myself to reply, for your words place Senora Linwood in rather an embarrassing position. It will be very hard for me to keep away, but it is for his good—for his good; and I can do it."

As he uttered the last words his voice faltered, and he turned away to conceal his emotion.

Mrs. Linwood noticed the Don's agitation, and sighed in sympathy, partly because he was deluded, partly because of the youth's illness. Then she slowly requested Sylvia to conduct her to the chamber.

Sylvia arose, and together they ascended the stairs.

As they entered the room, Sylvia led Mrs. Linwood forward, and as an introduction, said:

"Dear mamma; this is Senora Linwood, a lady who knows our Enrique, and has been very kind to him."

Donna Eulalie arose, and tried to smile, but the tears forced themselves into her eyes instead, and holding Mrs. Linwood's hand a moment, she murmured a welcome, in tones broken and almost inarticulate.

"Mamma," whispered Sylvia, "Mrs. Linwood is going to take care of Enrique. The doctor thinks

best, and so does papa, for he fears you are not strong enough. You will not object, my dear mamma?"

Donna Eulalie cast a quick, searching glance at Mrs. Linwood. Was a stranger about to usurp her place, and she a mother? Was she to stand aside and allow a friend to minister unto her darling boy?

These thoughts flew through Donna Eulalie's mind, and almost framed themselves into words, but were dispelled by the placid face of Mrs. Linwood bent kindly yet sadly upon her, and she instantly perceived that the "stranger" was not one who would force her presence, or seek to deprive a mother of her rights.

Mrs. Linwood seemed to read her thoughts, for she approached, gazed with veneration into the aged mother's face, and lowly said:

"I hope you do not think me presuming, in offering to take care of the youth. You will appreciate my motives, when I tell you that we have known each other for a very long time, and we are very much attached to each other."

Donna Eulalie did not remove her eyes from the speaker's face, but asked, in an impressive whisper:

"Are you a mother?"

Mrs. Linwood's face was overshadowed by a peculiar sadness; her eyelids drooped, and in tones of heartfelt regret she rejoined:

"No; Heaven has denied me that blessing."

When Donna Eulalie asked the question she did it with the intention of chiding Mrs. Linwood, if she should receive a negative reply. But that resolution was crushed and turned to compassion as she saw the real grief which her interrogatory had engendered, and the attributes of true womanhood which were made apparent by every word and look of her companion. A moment she was silent; then clasping Mrs. Linwood's hand, she said:

"I am an aged woman. I have passed through sorrow and joy, but the most sublime happiness which expands a true woman's soul, and ennobles her being, is to feel that she is a mother; that a portion of her life blooms in a second life. You are a noble woman—I feel it. I resign the care of my child to you, knowing that every consideration will be his from you."

Mrs. Linwood was visibly affected. Donna Eulalie's words sounded motherly to her. A moment she gazed upon her, and then, from an impulse which she could not resist, she pressed a reverential kiss upon her brow. Donna Eulalie placed her arms around her neck, and for a moment those two women, who never had beheld each other until that moment, rested in each other's arms like mother and daughter, drawn together by the magnetism of pure hearts, womanly aspirations, and noble souls.

Sylvia gazed upon them, and wondered.

Presently Mrs. Linwood moved towards the couch, and gazed upon the youth. He was sleeping quietly, and his face was more calm than before.

As she looked upon him tears welled into her eyes, thoughts of his bravery when the Falcon was sinking arose in her mind, and tenderly kissing the pallid brow, she murmured:

"Dear child, how he has suffered! What a weird, troubled life has been his!"

"You love my brother, dear lady?" queried Sylvia, in a low voice, and looking tenderly upon her.

Mrs. Linwood started slightly. So deep had she become in meditation, that she had quite forgotten the presence of Sylvia. She explained the cause of her abrupt motion, and then answered:

"He is very dear to me. I have loved him as I imagine I should a child of my own."

"And will you love me too?" and Sylvia glanced timidly into her face; "for I like you very much."

That benign smile, so soft, and like a halo of sunshine wreathed Mrs. Linwood's features as she replied:

"I was attracted towards you from the first, you are a sweet child."

"And you love mamma, too. It is so strange you make everybody love you," mused Sylvia.

Mrs. Linwood was about to speak, when her eyes fell upon the pallid face of the youth, and other thoughts were driven away, and sorrow took their place. Donna Eulalie drew near the couch, and stood between Sylvia and Mrs. Linwood. And all looked upon him, while forebodings as agonising as they were inexplicable filled their minds, and their hearts were chilled as they saw the pallor of his face.

#### CHAPTER I.

A WEEK had passed—a week, during which the cloud of sorrow like a dark shadow had hung over the home of the De Vega's, and seemed to change the very sunlight to blackness, and envelop the hearts of the loving ones in a pall of gloom, while the earth seemed to grow drear, and nature herself to weep in mourning.

Whiter had grown those beautiful features, and blacker and brighter those large, fathomless eyes, which now glowed with new brilliancy—but, oh! a brilliancy that caused the very souls of those who gazed upon it to tremble, and their very hearts to faint, as they thought of the dreadful contingency it inspired.

With all of a mother's tenderness, love, and solicitude; with all the care and caution of an experienced nurse; with all the forethought, observation, and discrimination of a physician; with all the nerve and resolution of a surgeon; with all the fortitude and perseverance of a heroine; and with all the delicacy, kindness, gentleness, and resignation of an angel, had the noble Mrs. Linwood tended the suffering youth by day and night, hardly leaving him, except when begged by her husband for his sake, and commanded by Senor Reno, for the preservation of her own health.

'Twas morning, and upon the lawn in front of the house, with her hands clasped, her face pale and stamped with that settled look of sorrow which keen trial produces, and her eyes directed mournfully upon the ground, was Sylvia.

Presently the tramp of a horse sounded o'er the road, and the next instant a steed dashed up to the lawn, bearing upon his back the petite form of Senorita Inez Carro, whose face, like the others, wore the imprint of grief. Quickly dismounting, she ran to Sylvia, and throwing her arms about her neck, burst out weeping before she could speak.

"Oh, Inez, do not weep!" pleaded Sylvia, in choked accents. "I need all my strength."

"Is Enrique better? Dear, dear Enrique! Tell me, darling—tell me!"

And the fair young face, with the great tears coursing down it, was for a moment lifted, while sobs welled up from the suffering heart.

Sylvia raised her eyes to Heaven as if seeking power of endurance, and then returned, in a stifled voice:

"No, Inez, he is not."

"What does Senor Reno say—what?"

"He gives no opinion, but looks very grave, and at times seems perplexed."

"But Enrique will not die?" cried Inez, gasping for breath. "Do not tell me he will die! If you do—oh, my heart—my heart!"

Sylvia drew a long respiration, and tenderly smoothing the chestnut hair back from the throbbing brow, slowly responded:

"Heaven knows best, Inez! I cannot tell."

For a moment Inez stood silent, while her lips moved feebly, and her little hands worked together as if in pain. Anon, in a frantic cry her grief burst forth:

"Oh, Sylvia, I cannot lose Enrique—I will not! Oh, why must I suffer so? Oh, my Enrique—my Enrique!"

"Do not mourn, Inez. I cannot bear it! Please don't, dear!"

And Sylvia shivered as with cold.

"But, Sylvia, just think, I have loved him so long! Oh, Heaven, let me die, too—let me die!"

And Inez clung to Sylvia's neck, while the tears rained from her eyes, and sobs of anguish escaped her lips, and were taken up by the south wind, until the very flowers seemed to weep as they bent their long stems to the ground.

"Oh, Inez, be calm, I beg of you!" ejaculated Sylvia, in tones hoarse and tremulous; "be calm and trust in Heaven, for it alone can aid us!"

"I will try!" gasped the stricken maiden. "I will try; but, remember, he has been my playmate in childhood—my companion! Oh, he is mine! My heart would wither without him—wither, wither!"

And the delicate white fingers clasped each other in the wildness of grief, and the fragile yet beautiful form rocked to and fro. And still the sun shone, but its light entered not those darkened hearts; and still the tropical buds breathed their perfume upon the air, but it was heeded not, for gaunt, grim, menacing death obscured the light of day, and seemed to breathe woe in the odour of the lovely plants.

And still those maidens stood there, folded in each other's arms, their hearts beating violently against each other, their tears flowing together, their spirits blending in sorrow's unison, and their bodies quivering with the weight of anguish which almost deprived them of strength.

"Oh, Inez, this must not be!" murmured Sylvia, trying to stem the rivulets of liquid sorrow which overflowed from the fountain of her heart; "I cannot help to take care of Enrique if I thus give way. Come, dear, try—oh, try and be quiet."

"I will—oh, I will!" ejaculated Inez, a strange tranquillity suddenly diffusing itself over her agitated spirit. "I will try, for surely the kind Father who has made nature smile and the birds to sing so sweetly, will not break my poor little heart!"

"Oh, no!" said Sylvia, clutching at the slightest hope, and endeavouring to cheer her friend; "He will not, for He is good."

And for a moment a silence as of mingled awe and reverence filled their hearts with quietude, and their minds with a sublime and hallowed peace, while the mild southern zephyrs wafted across their cheeks, and the golden radiance of the orb of day seemed to increase, and in voices of heavenly chorus the words seemed to tremble upon the balm-laden air:

"Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without His knowledge."

Moments passed, and the two girls spoke not, but gazed into each other's faces as if collecting fortitude to struggle on through the darkness of grief.

"May I see Enrique?" asked Inez, at length breaking the silence.

"Will you be very quiet? If you will, you may; but the faintest sound disturbs him."

"I will, dear," answered Inez, dropping her eyes and endeavouring to infuse rigidity into her expression. "I will be very quiet."

"Come, then."

And with these words Sylvia clasped her friend's hand within her own, and the two moved silently into the house, and quietly ascended the stairs.

Lying upon the snow-white couch, his jetty curls forming a beautiful yet terrible contrast with his pallid face, which was now thin and *spirituelle*, was the youth, while one attenuated hand rested upon the coverlet.

At one side of the bed was Mrs. Linwood, her face very pale, and her brown eyes emitting a light which told only too plainly of the anguish which pervaded her being, while a few feet removed from her was Donna Eulalie, her aged face the picture of acute pain.

Standing near the window, his form at times trembling as he looked upon the suffering youth, was Don Santo, his eyes heavy and his features careworn.

As Sylvia and Inez entered they were greeted only by glances sad and subdued, and, with a faint reply, they moved slowly towards the bed.

Bending over the couch, while the tears would creep into her eyes in defiance of her strenuous efforts to repress them, Inez gazed lovingly upon him and murmured:

"Do you know me, Enrique?"

"Oh, yes, Inez," came in a faint whisper, and his lips moved as if trying to smile.

"Are you better, dear?" and a sob broke from her heart ere she could stay it.

"I hope so," was the equivocal answer, for he wished not to pain her.

Inez turned away, hesitated, and then returned and pressed a kiss upon the pink lips. His eyes rested upon her an instant, and she hurried from the room; she could not gaze into their lustrous depths and feel that ere long they would be closed in death. The thought was agony inexpressible, and rushing into the sitting-room, now deserted and cheerless, she threw herself upon the lounge, and sobbed until it seemed her heart would break.

A moment after Inez departed, the youth turned his luminous orbs upon Mrs. Linwood, and articulated in a whisper:

"You will tell Mr. Tweed, if he be alive, that I thought of him, will you not?"

"Oh, Frank—dear, dear Frank," and Mrs. Linwood's voice gave way, "you will not—"

"Do not weep," he murmured, while a look of holy resignation overspread his features; "mine has been a useless life. I am prepared to go. I feel a strange weakness in my head, I—"

His voice failed him, and he breathed laboriously. Donna Eulalie overheard his words, and straining her hands together, while her form rocked to and fro, she huskily cried:

"Oh, spare—spare him—my—my only son!"

And Don Santo clutched his hair and moaned aloud, while his eyes were distended with grief and terror:

"My life—my pride—my boy! Oh, Father, strike not my last years with his loss!"

"My only brother," ejaculated Sylvia, at last overcome; "my darling brother! Oh, do not let him die, oh, Heaven, hear a sister's prayer!"

At that moment, Captain Linwood, accompanied by Senor Reno, entered the apartment.

"Oh, doctor, look at him—tell me, is there life?" And Don Santo grasped his arm with tremulous hand, and glared upon him, almost wild.

Slowly, noiselessly, Senor Reno approached the bed, and folding his arms, looked upon that transparent face, with its beaming eyes, while his features became clouded.

"Doctor," and Mrs. Linwood's heart throbbed furiously, and her breath came spasmodically, while her face wore a look of intense grief, "tell me, is it death?"



Senor Reno sighed, and answered, in low tones: "My friends, there is but one hope, and that lies in the strongest medicine known to my practice."

A leaden weight seemed pressing upon the hearts of those who with sorrow and fear were passing through an ordeal, most dreadful—most exhaustive.

None spoke; not a sound broke that ominous stillness, as Senor Reno prepared the medicine, and administered it to his patient.

Then, as that was over, there commenced a struggle of hope with fear, of love with despair, and still the minutes dragged into hours, and each heard the pulsations of his neighbour's heart, and each and every eye sought the couch in mute inquiry, and then glanced beseechingly at the physician.

The suspense became terrible; it strengthened into torment, it suggested phantoms of awful thought to the agonised mind, it laid icy hands upon hearts already cold with sorrow, it grew intolerable, it shook every nerve, it caused heated brows to throb, until they threatened to burst, it made throats parched, and weary spirits to falter; and still no answer to that all-absorbing question!

Moments passed—a silence, portentous and debilitating, hung over that room—a silence whose issue was to appal with anguish or rejuvenate with hope.

Which, oh, Heaven, would it be?

With face pale, with eye bright, and every faculty keenly alive to the least change in that youthful face, Senor Reno gazed upon him, nor spoke, nor moved, nor hardly seemed to breathe, so deep and fervent that interest, so earnest to save human life, so zealous and careful of professional honour.

A slight tinge of red appeared upon the youth's cheeks; then it faded away, his eyelids drooped, and an increasing feebleness appeared to pervade his frame.

"Doctor, in the name of Heaven, will he live?" And Don Santo staggered towards him, raised his frenzied face to his, and clasped his hands in the bitterness of despair.

"Wait!—hush!"

And the physician bent nearer—scanned that marble-like face, and looked into those eyes, over which the lids were slowly closing.

Oh, what a look of unutterable, undefinable, anguish convulsed the features of Donna Eulalie, as she tottered towards the doctor, gazed into his face with terror and supplication intermingled, placed her quivering hand upon his arm, and said, in choked whispers:

"I am his mother—he is my son—only—only son! Doctor, will he—will he live?"

The tears started in Senor Reno's eyes; the sight of that sorrowful woman unmanned him. Again he looked upon the youth, and then sadly replied:

"Heaven only knows! Man's power is at an end!"

And then in that room went up wails of anguish; there mingling in heart-rending accents were the father's wild lament, and the mother's piteous cry of heart agony; there the scalding tears rolled down the hardy sailor's cheek, and the sister's moans rose upon the air.

And there upon that bed lay he who had passed through so many strange scenes; there lay he who but a short time since could curb the angry steed, or face the fiercely-rushing tempest; there lay he of the fiery heart, alas! weak and senseless.

And at that awful moment, portentous in its birth of events, a wild shriek of mingled agony and affright echoed with a weird sound through the room, and Inez rushed in, her face white as virgin snow, her eyes dilated and staring, and her nostrils quivering.

As she reached the bed she paused, lifted her head, clasped her hands, and sinking slowly upon her knees, devoutly murmured, in tones which thrilled every hearer to the very soul:

"Oh, Heaven, most just!—oh, merciful Heaven! in a mother's name I beg, in a father's hope I plead, for my maiden's heart I beseech thee, spare him—spare him! Take me as a sacrifice, oh, Heaven, but save him!"

Those luminous orbs slowly opened. "Has Heaven heard her prayer?" cried the Don, in mingled hope and dismay.

"I know not." And Senor Reno bent his head.

"His eyes again close," gasped Mrs. Linwood.

"He sinks upon the pillow."

"Yes! Oh, Heaven, he's gone!" and Captain Linwood dropped powerless into a chair.

"My child dead!—dead! Oh, n-no, no, no!" and Donna Eulalie sank insensible to the floor.

#### CHAPTER LI.

SINCE the return of him who had (?) shared a portion of the sorrows of her childhood, the life of the heiress had changed somewhat. The sameness and monotony had been relieved by the visits of Arthur, which, as time passed on, became more fre-

quent, and which, as they increased, grew more pleasant to her, and added to the regard which she felt for him.

To Miss Angelina the visits of Arthur occasioned much annoyance and trouble, and although at first she had made no comments, she had determined that the intercourse between the young people should be checked. Accordingly, after the third appearance of Arthur, she very gently suggested the propriety of a severance of their friendship, or else a more limited acquaintance.

The heiress, as it happened, was at that moment disturbed by unpleasant thought, and to her the words of her aunt seemed to savour of command, which engendered new irritation, and caused her to give a very decisive and spirited reply, to the effect that she should not give up the companionship of Arthur, and that he should come to see her as often as he desired.

Miss Angelina stood horrified. Was there ever such an obstinate, wilful child born before? And after expressing to dear Seraphina the substance of Alice's remarks, in language, however, which was more forcible than refined, she decided upon a course which should prevent the lad from coming to the house, and at the same time give no intimation to the heiress of her intention; consequently, she conciliated Alice by a few well-chosen words, which allayed any suspicions the latter might have had, and caused her to think that Miss Angelina had at last wearied of her fruitless opposition to her wishes and had resolved to let the subject rest.

These incidents had occurred in the course of one week.

At the beginning of the second week Miss Angelina had proceeded to put her plans in operation. Accordingly she gave the servant instruction not to admit Arthur under any consideration, but to detain him in the entry, and summon her, while she placed herself at one of the front windows; and to debar Alice from perceiving the approach of the lad—which might interrupt, and for a time paralyse her efforts—stationed Miss Seraphina at the other window, and arranged a private signal, which the latter should use to warn her of the coming of the enemy, for as such Miss Angelina considered the bright-eyed, dark-haired lad.

Thus it was—to use military diction—that Miss Angelina had her skirmishers deployed, her pickets stationed, her scouts in service, and the rear held and well guarded by the servant; while the innocent and unconscious cause of all this Amazonian strategy, occupied in blissful ignorance the centre of the position, and knew not, nor even suspected the manner in which she was surrounded by a resolute and relentless enemy.

Throughout one whole day, and until the afternoon of the following one, did the two spinsters hold their position at the front windows, when suddenly Miss Seraphina gave the long-looked-for warning, and Miss Angelina knew that the foe was approaching; and although much excited by eager anticipation, she managed to preserve her self-possession. Presently the servant appeared and informed her that the "grocer" was below.

Miss Angelina smiled, and descended to the hall, where she saw the youth, and informed him that henceforth his visits were prohibited.

He appeared somewhat surprised, and requested her to state her reasons; but she, fearful lest Alice should step into the hall, and discover the state of affairs, deigned not to render an explanation, but with more decision of voice and manner again repeated her commands, and the youth with an indignant glance left the house.

"I've won again! Oh, woman, what a glorious combination thou art!" was Miss Angelina's self-adoratory exclamation as she repeated the result to Miss Seraphina, who of course echoed her words, and added much flattery, until the former considered herself superior to every military strategist that ever existed. And this belief increased, when upon the day following she intercepted a letter directed to the heiress, and which, upon examination, proved to be from Arthur, who adverted rather ironically to Miss Angelina's appearance and actions, and begged Alice to tell him why he should be expelled from her presence.

If anything more had been required to increase the querulous spinster's aversion to the youth, this communication would have amply sufficed, for the references which it contained towards her much-loved self were anything but complimentary, and served to rouse her anger to a high degree.

The second day had passed. Arthur had not called, as was his custom, and Alice wondered much in regard to the cause, though she had not the faintest suspicion of her aunt, for everything had been conducted so quietly, that she noticed nothing out of the usual course.

With this brief retrospective view, I bring this por-

tion of my narrative down to the closing of the foregoing chapter.

It was rather late in the afternoon, and Miss Angelina, her intimate friend, and the heiress were seated in the drawing-room.

"Oh, dear," sighed Miss Seraphina, surveying her poodle sympathetically; "I am much troubled about one thing."

"Pray, dear, what can it be?" queried Miss Angelina, with an anxious look.

Miss Seraphina cast down her eyes, stroked her dog's back meditatively, and lowly answered:

"It is about poor Mr. Smilesot. Only think! we have not seen him since that terrible night: I hope he was not injured!"

"So do I," said Miss Angelina, elongating her chin; "but I fear the worst. You remember how fierce those ruffians were. Poor man! he may have been murdered!"

"Oh, don't speak of it, dear!" cried Miss Seraphina, in a tremulous voice, and vigorously fanning herself; "it quite unstrings my nerves, and they are so delicate—oh!" and she reclined in her chair and breathed heavily.

"Dear Seraphina, pardon me!" cooed Miss Angelina, elevating her right shoulder, and looking askance at her friend; "I know it must affect you; he thought so much of you."

"Don't—don't! Angelina dear," ejaculated Miss Seraphina, hardly above a whisper, and throwing out one hand deprecatingly. "The mention of it makes me quite weak; I am so fragile."

"It is strange," remarked Alice, "that you should feel so much interest in one of that sex which you both so despise."

Miss Seraphina forgot her deep solicitude and the weakness of her nerves, and cast a quick, angry glance towards the heiress, and then, remembering the former, sank back into her chair and assumed her usual languid air.

Miss Angelina compressed her lips, and tapped the floor with her foot, while the indignation which, from policy, found no vent in words, shone from her eyes.

"Did you not hear me?" asked Alice, with a pleasant smile.

"Oh, yes," replied Miss Angelina, bobbing her head from one side to the other, and trying to steady her voice; "but it is very hard for you to understand the profundity of our opinions concerning the other sex, for they are very finely discriminated, and it is useless for us to reply to your sarcasm."

"Ah," returned the heiress, raising her eyebrows, while a smile, somewhat scornful, played around her lips; "then I have learned something which I never before knew—that profundity consists in gross inconsistency."

No longer could Miss Angelina restrain her ire, and stamping her foot, she snapped:

"Inconsistency, indeed! I should like to know what you mean?"

"Pray do not get excited, aunt," said Alice, very quietly; "there is not the least need of it. If you object to the word 'inconsistency,' you can call it by any other name you please."

"It!—what do you mean by 'it'?" screamed Miss Angelina, with contracted brow and quivering lip.

"Why, I mean your affected dislike to the other sex, and your perfect delight when in the company of any of its members." And the blue eyes twinkled mischievously.

Miss Angelina pressed her hands together, moved uneasily on her chair, and exclaimed:

"You're a very strange girl, Alice Wilton, for if it were anybody but you I should call it impudence. Perfect delight, indeed! I hate men, and you know it!"

"So do I, dear!" yawned Miss Seraphina.

"Ah, ladies, how grieved I am to hear you speak thus!"

And hat in hand, and his face wearing a serio-comic expression of gravity, Mr. Francis Smilesot advanced into the room.

Alice's conception of the ridiculous was so acute, her natural vivacity so great, that exert herself as she would, she could not repress the laughter which burst from her rich lips in clear, ringing notes, and echoed through the apartment in dulcet peals.

Consternation, mortification, and anger held the ladies speechless, and they gazed at each other, not knowing what to say or where to look.

At length Miss Seraphina passed her hand across her brow as if bewildered, gazed blankly at the gentleman, then sighing deeply, languidly extended her hand, and murmured:

"Oh, Mr. Smilesot, are you really here? Oh, you came so suddenly, you almost frightened me—oh!"

"My dear Seraphina—"

"Oh! o-h!" cried Miss Seraphina, starting back in affected terror; "oh, naughty Mr. Smilesot!"

The gentleman looked confused, twirled his hat between his fingers, and stammered:

"My lively interest—yes—ahem! that is to say—ahem! ahem!—really, Miss Seraphina, your pardon—the fact is—oh, dear, it's very warm for October!" and Mr. Smilessoft sank into a chair.

"Poor Mr. Smilessoft," simpered Miss Angelina, sympathetically.

"Yes, you're quite right, it is very warm," absently muttered Mr. Smilessoft, applying his handkerchief to his brow.

"Oh, Mr. Smilessoft," sighed Miss Seraphina, quite willing to take the fearful risk of again being addressed as "dear," "we have not seen you since that awful night—how did you escape from those villains?"

"Ahem! yes, I will tell you presently; but I hope, I really hope you will forgive me for my inconsiderate words of a moment since. You see, it is more of a custom in France than it is here. *Ma chère* we there say very often to the ladies. You understand, I hope?"

"Oh, certainly, Mr. Smilessoft," responded Miss Seraphina, with a smile which she intended to be fascinating; "I can readily see how the formalities of our colder clime must constrain you; I was merely startled because you entered so unexpectedly, and—and I was thinking of you a moment before."

"Oh, happy am I to know that one thought of me lingered in your mind," observed Mr. Smilessoft, with a low bow; "it repays me for all I have suffered."

"And you have suffered?" murmured Miss Angelina, with a look of tender solicitude.

"Yes, Miss Angelina," rejoined Mr. Smilessoft, dejectedly; "and it was renewed by hearing you and your friend say that you hated men."

"You quite misunderstand us," answered Miss Angelina, somewhat embarrassed; "or rather, you knew not why we said it."

"And drawing nearer to him she confidentially continued:

"You see, there are many fortune-hunters who have assailed our darling Alice, and we wished to impress upon her their utter worthlessness, and drive all thought of them from her mind; that is why we used those words."

"Ah, most proper," commented Mr. Smilessoft, approvingly, "most proper, ladies. I ask your pardon for having aspersed you by the intimation that you hated men; it would be quite impossible for you to do so with your naturally kind and gentle natures."

"Oh, yes, quite," said Miss Seraphina, meekly.

"Oh, but you know, we must make believe sometimes," smirked Miss Angelina, with an assumption of coquetry, "or you men would flatter yourselves so, you know."

"Exactly. You are very witty, Miss Angelina," replied Mr. Smilessoft; "in fact, charmingly so. Pardon me, but it is true."

"Oh, Mr. Smilessoft!"

And Miss Angelina put her finger in her mouth, shaking her head like a silly, frivolous girl.

"Oh, Mr. Smilessoft!" echoed Miss Seraphina, and shook her curls, and looked at him from out the corners of her eyes.

"The gentleman has not told us how he escaped," interposed Alice, disgusted at the lavish display of nonsense.

"Ah, really," returned Mr. Smilessoft. "You see, ladies, your company is so charming, that I forgot all coarser things in your presence, but I will repeat it as briefly as I can. You see, after I had been conquered by the ruffians who assaulted us at the carriage, I was dragged into the woods and gagged, so that when help came, I could not make my proximity known. You may be sure, although a strong and brave man—here Mr. Smilessoft rolled his eyes and beat his breast—"that, surrounded as I was by bloodthirsty villains, I could not help feeling a slight anxiety in regard to myself; not fear, ladies—no, no! but a wish to get away; that was all. I was robbed, everything upon my person was taken, and then I was struck. Hours of unconsciousness followed, and at last I awoke, weak and faint. I staggered to the nearest house, and there procured food and care. I have been quite ill since then, but I think I was very fortunate in escaping with my life!"

"Oh, how terrible!" exclaimed Miss Angelina, with an exhibition of deep sympathy. "How glad I am that it was no worse!"

"How glad I am that it was no worse!" repeated Miss Seraphina, with a sad and what she esteemed sweet smile.

"Oh, ladies, receive my heartfelt thanks!" said Mr. Smilessoft, pressing his hand to his side, and bowing low; "and let me add, that your acquaintance is the brightest spot of my existence."

"How nice you do talk," smirked Miss Angelina, behind her handkerchief.

"What beautiful words he uses," lisped Miss Seraphina, glancing tenderly towards him.

"Ladies, my bosom is overflowing with thankfulness to know that you appreciate me!" exclaimed Mr. Smilessoft, with a lofty air; "and the purpose of my visit is to ask one—*one*—"

"Oh!"

And Miss Seraphina partially closed her eyes and gasped for breath, for she half-imagined that the gentleman was about to make a matrimonial proposition.

Mr. Smilessoft glanced perplexedly from one to the other, and then resumed:

"Is to ask one and all of you to accompany me this evening to the theatre. Do you honour me, ladies?"

"I thank you, sir, but I should prefer to remain at home," observed Alice, haughtily, for her pure nature had shrunk from the systematic deceit and servile sycophancy which they poured in torrents upon each other.

"The impudent little hussy," thought Miss Angelina; but she merely cast a mildly reproving glance towards her, and then turning to Mr. Smilessoft with a smile that multiplied her dimples, (?) lowly said:

"You are so kind, Mr. Smilessoft, so very kind. What shall we say, Seraphina dear?"

"Lor! I really can't say," snickered Miss Seraphina, inclining her head, and gazing sidewise at the gentleman. "But see, Angelina dear, Mr. Smilessoft begins to look sad, and as I would not pain him, why, we accept, with thanks."

"Ah! you are so generous," ejaculated Mr. Smilessoft, clasping his hands. "You make me very happy; yet I do wish Miss Alice would accompany us."

"She loves solitude; she is somewhat peculiar in her tastes," returned Miss Angelina, in a low tone; then, addressing the heiress, she added: "Won't you go, dear? We all want you to."

"Please excuse me," responded Alice, briefly.

(To be continued.)

## LOTUS EYES;

OR,

## ELSIE'S FATE.

It was a charming retreat—a spot where Nature had lavished her choicest gifts. I remember it so well, though years have passed since that warm spring day, when, after my long walk through the sweet secluded lane, I paused beside the little gate that opened upon the gravel path leading up to the house. A fair picture, surely, rife with so much loveliness that one would fail signally in endeavouring to describe it; the long, low cottage home, with its ash-coloured gables and tiles, over which a wealth of morning glories revelled in the glancing sunlight, mingled with the wild sweet-briar rose that clambered in delightful rivalry, to whose countless blossoms the warm breeze had whispered, wakening them to a life of exquisite fragrance. The wide-spreading trees arched protectively above, and in the branches clothed with "living green" happy birds trilled their joyous thanksgiving lays. The atmosphere had a peace-giving, tranquillising effect upon me, to whom, though not yet old in the eyes of the world, earth had awarded many cares. But as I lingered, growing dreamy in that sweet rose-bower, and thoughts and memories came stealing over me, and with a shudder and a sigh as I glanced upwards at the deserted tenement, I started again upon my homeward route. This, dear friend, was the substance of my dreams:—

Five years had dragged their shadowy lengths away, since, coming home in the early winter sunset, my father told us, as we sat together round the social board, with glowing countenance, of the accomplishment of his work—the building of my brother's future home. Bertha was one of the party that evening—dear, sweet Bertha—I see her now, the delicate rose-flush tinting the fair face, bent low over her embroidery frame, as we gently bantered her on being its destined mistress—destined, did I say? Well, we did not know then. Ronald, my stalwart, dark-eyed brother—all we had—had won Bertha Desmond for his bride, and in the following summer they would be married and take possession of that fairy nook—Rose Cottage—my father's gift to them. It was a bright prospect; but Time, the leonoclast, with one dread swoop, shattered their castles in the dust. Dear, bright, noble Ronald, these many years he has slept under the green sod.

Do you marvel that I sighed to see the dear place so lonely and deserted? for these were the sorrowful remembrances that came to me as I walked on through the balmy evening towards my home. As I approached it my father was descend-

ing from the old porch, and seeing me, he paused and said in a low, troubled voice:—

"Katherine, it may be sudden news for you, my child, but I have let the cottage, and the new tenants will move in next week."

I plainly discerned that he could barely endure the idea of strangers treading the paths which might have been worn with the footsteps of his eldest born, and I determined that I would not augment the feeling in his heart, reciprocate it, though I might, in my own. So I spoke up bravely:

"Well, father, I think you have done well. We cannot go there to live ourselves, and it seems a great pity that so much beauty should gradually fall into decay for want of use and attention. But who are your prospective tenants, may I ask?"

"I do not know much about them; they are, or seem to be, people with money in plenty, who have come here in quest of quiet and retirement during the summer months. You will see something of them, I have no doubt."

Now, I was a little dubious of this last prevision, for already I began to dislike and prejudice myself against these unknown intruders; but throwing all this out of the question, it was settled at last, and the unwelcome news sped like wildfire through the village, that Farmer Farquarson had let the cottage, and that already preparations were going on for the reception of the strangers.

By nature, I repeat, that I am prejudiced, and a restless dread of something near at hand seized me—strange, fathomless misgivings as to who or what they might be. Then I fell to wondering what Elsie would say when she should come home and find the dear place usurped by strangers.

Elsie was my only sister, young and bright as the brightest of Queen Mab's airy subjects, and she had been Ronald's pet in the far-away days when Ronald lived.

She was away at school near Paris, and we were looking forward to the early time when she should return to be the light and sunshine of our old homestead; not to say that it was dreary or gloomy to me, but sometimes I grew lonesome in the quiet house with no companionship save that of my aged father, whose head, prematurely bowed by suffering, the snows of threescore winters were fast whitening, and I longed for some sweet, happy face upon which my tired eyes might rest now and then, some merry voice, unbroken by life's discords, to sing the songs of childhood once again.

Elsie was very dear to me, and we were unlike in all respects; she was gay and joyous, always the centre of an admiring host of friends, and I knew or rather felt that she would marry young, leaving me utterly alone; for Fate had no such reservation in store for me. It was just eight years since I had seen the early lilies spring from the grave where my heart with its early love lay buried; and throughout the whole of Westdale and its vicinity, the name of Katherine Farquarson meant all that could express voluntary old-maidism—all that was shut away from love and tenderness.

So when the June roses bloomed into fullest beauty Elsie was with us again, bringing a flood of sunshine to our hearts. But she was not the same. The playful childishness which had found no greater delight than that afforded by the care of her pet birds, was gone, and in its place had come the ripened fulness and perfection of an exquisite womanhood. With her cultivated tastes, refined sensibilities, and acute comprehension, I knew that the every-day life in our home was not the sphere requisite to show off her graces to advantage, or bring to light that polish and tone which commingling with French society had imparted to her. My plain, home eyes saw all this as though it were a flash, and I shuddered to think of the barrier that would rise when that for which Nature had intended her should find her out, and take her from my love for evermore.

One summer morning she stood by me, as I was busily engaged in pruning a refractory "Malmalson" that had long needed my attention—our fair, beautiful Elsie—the pure, crisp folds of her white dress seeming to fit themselves into her own faultless symmetry, pancies glowing amid the waves of her golden hair, pancies nestling with purple-eyed tenderness in the delicate lace encircling her snowy throat. The butterflies as they flitted from flower to flower ceased their buzzing and listened to the low musical tones of her voice, as she talked to me of the tenants at the cottage. I had been considerably surprised by a lack of interest on her part when the subject had been first mentioned in her presence; but that the thought of Ronald's home being usurped by strangers nettled her I had not a doubt; the heightened colour on her lovely cheek, the flashing in the depths of her sapphire eyes, betrayed her indignation to my vigilance; but then the world had taught her



that lesson by which we chain down our feelings, and give no more token of the inner workings of the soul than the waveless surface of the summer sea gives of the storm that yesterday ruffled its placid breast.

"Elsie," said I, "probably you know something of these fine aristocrats; they came from Paris, I believe, and, from what I have learned, look down upon the village people of Westdale as quite an inferior race, plebeians, all of us."

I looked up in time to see the rose-tint flushing her face—the proud arching of the Juno throat as she quietly answered:

"I have met the Calthorpes at Madame du Berri's; they are high-toned people. I have no doubt our simple neighbours stand somewhat in awe of them; but I cannot think it possible for the Calthorpe family to give themselves airs."

"Do you intend to call at the cottage, Elsie? I should think, after your gay time in Paris, their society would tend to make the monotony of your country life less irksome! Will you hand me that wine, dear?—thank you—there! I shall soon have done. They do say they have fitted up Rose Cottage in a most wonderful manner;—splendid rooms, costly statuary, rare paintings, and many various works of art, to say nothing of the curious Indian cabinets and nick-nacks which some one of the family recently brought home from the East. But, Elsie, what all you, child? you are as white as your dress. I have kept you standing too long; let us go to the house!"

"No, no, Katherine," she laughed, "it is nothing. A thorn from that sweet-briar pricked me, and I am so childish that the sight of a scratch makes me faint. See!"

And she held up her hand, so white and dainty, from which the blood was slowly trickling, that I might wrap my handkerchief about the injured member. Then we went in.

It was shortly after this that Elsie called at Rose Cottage, and I accompanied her. I found them as she had said—the Calthorpes—people of a most gracious presence, haughty, one could see at a glance, but, withal, suave and affable in their manners, to her especially affectionate and tender. There were but two of them at first—a white-haired man, whose face bore the marks of premature age—a certain weariness stamping itself upon the clear-cut features, and in whose mild, gentle manners, and soft, melancholy voice I read the unmistakable proofs that some time in his life he had known sorrow and been acquainted with grief. His daughter Miriam, the invalid, with her dark, lotus eyes, so dreamy and liquid under their heavy lashes, and her oval, olive-tinted face set in a framework of lovely-banded tresses that seemed to have borrowed the hue of the raven's wing, sat by the open window, looking out where the birds and butterflies held their feast amid the roses. The magnificent India shawl with which she was enveloped fell back as she half rose to meet us, disclosing to view the costly elegance of her thin white dress, and the undulating grace of her figure. It recalled to my mind some work of the great masters, as, taking my Elsie's fair face between her jewelled hands, she kissed her brow, murmuring some low, sweet words of welcome, and then turned to greet me.

"And this is Katherine, the dear good sister, of whom I have heard so often. We are near neighbours now, and I shall expect to see a great deal of you, Miss Farquarson; and when Geoffrey comes home we shall have quite a pleasant party, and be able to pass the time pleasantly and profitably. But then—Geoffrey!"

I saw her eyes fall upon Elsie's sweet face with a startled, agonised expression, and the half-finished sentence died upon her lips that quivered with the vibration of some chord—a hidden emotion—the faint indication of which perplexed and bewildered me.

What could it mean? I looked at my sister; she was bending low over the cage in the corner of the apartment, chirping softly to her friend's pet birds, innocent and unconscious. If, as is generally conceded, there is oftentimes a sort of mesmeric charm in the human voice, this woman possessed it to perfection; for soon, with those dark, mysterious eyes fixed upon my face, and her low, musical voice speaking to me through these channels, which are known only to those of the highest intellectual culture, the vague impressions which her conduct had given me vanished, and I forgot all, save that Miriam Calthorpe sat before me—a woman beautiful as any dream of past or present.

Behind her chair stood the Indian ayah, to whom her slightest wish was law and her father coming in now and then, would break off suddenly in his conversation with Elsie, and, advancing to his daughter's side, would softly and caressingly pass his hand over her beautiful hair, evincing in his demeanour

towards her, a tender, watchful solicitude for which I could not by any means account; she seemed unlike an invalid to me.

Walking home through the twilight, I started Elsie from the reverie into which she had fallen by the sudden question:

"Who is Geoffrey?"

Was it the shadow of the over-arching leaves that cast its glow upon her face—was that colour stealing into her cheek but the reflex of the roses she had idly plucked as we sauntered slowly through the lane, when she answered me:

"Only Miriam's elder brother—coming home soon, after an absence of months."

Then I thought of that strange look in the lotus-eyes, and somehow, connecting the name of Geoffrey Calthorpe with that of my Elsie—I asked:

"And you, darling, is he a friend of yours?"

"Friend—yes; I believe we are friends."

I almost fancied there was bitterness in the words—you see, I had studied her voice in all its tones. Then we both relapsed into silence again—going homeward. Faint and soft through the wide-spread meadow land came, mingled with the cricket's cheery song, sweet echoes of the village bells, while near at hand, among the grasses that overhung the brook, the wandering glow-worm kindled her fitful spark.

Over my head I heard the cooing call of the mother-bird as she gathered her young beneath her wings; at some distance before me I saw the light awaiting me in my father's window, and traced the dim outlines of my childhood's happy home. Yet an undefinable sadness came over me, and would not be shaken off, as though some shadow from the future had reached forward to bind me in its irksome folds.

Morning came; and with sunshine, birds, and flowers to cheer me, the incubus was gone. But when Elsie came down to me in the garden, equipped for a walk to Rose Cottage, I generally excused myself for some trivial reason, and so she made her visits all alone; since I had no wish to undergo again the effect of that one visit to the Calthorpes. Sometimes I fancied her regrets were but tamely expressed. Well, who could blame the child? I was old and staid; it was natural that she should crave younger and gayer companionship than I could give her.

So the June days wore on, and much of Elsie's time was passed with the Calthorpes. Before she came, I had yearned for the child to comfort me with her sweet, winsome ways; now I was not content, for she could never be the same; some invisible hand seemed drawing her slowly from me, separating her love from mine. I knew Geoffrey Calthorpe had come, though Elsie never told me of him.

There was a broad walk running the whole length of our garden wall, hedged on either side by rose and lilac bushes, and intersected at various intervals by gravel paths leading to small iron gates sunk deep in the heavy stone-masonry separating the Farquarson domain from the quiet country-lane beyond. It was near one of these gateways, one summer afternoon, that I made the discovery that changed my whole after-life. After seeking in vain for Elsie through the lonely house, I looked for her among the honeysuckle vines, where old Ben, the gardener, had seen her busy with a book. She was not there; but farther on, where the dying sunlight fell in great golden lanes through the awaying branches of some garbled old trees, I saw the flutter of her white dress, and found her—how? She was standing inside the iron gate, talking in earnest tones to a horseman, whose mettled steed seemed only quieted by the soft pressure of her hand upon his mane. The rider was a man upon the shady side of thirty, tall and splendidly proportioned, with an abundance of wavy black hair shading a broad intellectual forehead, and features that were handsome to a fault. His rich complexion seemed bronzed by the warm sun of some tropical clime, and under the heavy brows I saw the same lotus-eyes that had so bewildered and fascinated me in Miriam Calthorpe. But there was a strange gleam in them—a wild recklessness as of some longing unsatisfied—as he bent over his saddle-bow, speaking in tender, impassioned tones to the fair girl, whose face—what was it that I read in Elsie's face? It seemed to me stamped with the impress of a strong, undying love; but alas! that love which passes through this life for ever unrewarded. I thought of the old picture hanging in my father's library, portraying the fable of the "Hawk and Dove," only, if I knew ought of physiognomy there was no evil in his face. Parting the heavy foliage, I bent eagerly forward that I might scan once more that strange countenance, and shuddered to see the look of utter despair that had settled upon it.

"Was it wrong to become an eavesdropper? No, no; I was her sister, her guardian—it was my duty to shield the child from evil should it come. I drew

a few paces nearer, and, crouching behind the thick hedge of roses, listened to their words. I saw Elsie place one hand upon his arm, saw the look of agonised appeal she turned upon him as she said:

"Oh! Geoffrey, is it *then* so near, and no hope, no shadow of hope for reprieve?"

"Alas, none! Oh, Elsie, my darling! it seems as though my heart would burst with the wild, rebellious thoughts that convulse me. You know all—how terrible the calamity will be; and oh! if it were not for my faith in Heaven, which will not leave me; if it were not that you would then be lost to me eternally, I could find it in me to take the life He gave, since it can only yield me torment and misery!"

There was a pause; neither spoke for some minutes, but Elsie's tiny hand crept softly into his, and I saw him bend lower, till his lips, whispering words I could not understand, almost touched her brow. Then I saw the bright flush that stole into her cheek as she answered:

"Oh, Geoffrey! dear Geoffrey! it seems so hard to deceive them!—so hard and cruel to break their hearts; but, Heaven knows, I will do whatever you say; you are good and will not lead me from the right path."

"Never, Elsie, never while I live! But it is growing late—I shall be needed at the cottage."

"So soon, Geoffrey, so soon?"

Again the look of a dying gazelle as Elsie turned her gaze upon his face, and his great, unfathomable orbs fixed themselves on her with insatiable hunger, his full lips quivered as he bent down and caught Elsie in his strong arms, straining her to his breast in the mad fervour of his passion, tenderly smoothing her rich, shining hair, and kissing away the great tears that welled up under her long, shadowy lashes. The next moment I heard the sound of hoofs galloping down the lane, and Elsie stood alone.

With the weary burden of this revelation, that was more than half mystery on my brain, I managed to grope my way back to the house and reach my room, where I could prepare to meet my father at tea, without being seen. Elsie did not come down that evening; a violent headache, she said, kept her in her room, whither I went to see her. My gentle tap being unnoticed, I noiselessly pushed open the door and entered. No light in the room, but upon the painted floor, with the broad moonlight streaming full upon her through the open window, her long hair falling like a veil about her form, knelt my Elsie, with her face buried in the cushions of her chair.

"Elsie," I asked, "are you not well?"

She lifted up to me that pale face with dark circles enclosing the great yearning eyes, and I was answered. No need to tell me in words the story of that "heart bowed down by weight of woe." And yet bending by my sister's side I besought her:

"Oh, Elsie, my only one, what is drawing you from me—stealing your heart from my love? Am I not your sister, Elsie? Will you not tell me of your trouble?"

Oh! so sad and mournful were the tones of her voice as she replied:

"Nay, Katherine, you are all, dearest sister, that is good and lovely, but even to you I may not reveal the sorrow that is breaking my heart. Trust me—forgive me, Katherine—ere long you must know all!"

It was enough; I could trust her, and wait. Miriam Calthorpe was ill again, and Elsie was to go to her on the morrow to remain some days. She needed rest, so I left her in the moonlight, to her dreams. Shall I ever forget that subtle something in Elsie's eyes turned with their mute pleading upon me the last time ere she went out to brave—what?

As the next day wore on, I missed her presence strangely, a weight of gloom pressing upon heart and sense like the foreshadowing of evil. At nightfall on the third day, when my suspense at not hearing from the child was growing intolerable, the groom of the Calthorpes came with a note from Miriam, bidding us repair to the cottage immediately. I seem to see his face even now—my old white-haired father—as it gleamed deathly pale in the moonlight. Some harm to Elsie I know he feared—such harm as I also dreaded. Impatience lent us wings, perhaps, for ere long we had reached our destination. Haidee, the quadroom, met us at the door, and ushered us into the inner apartment, where Miriam Calthorpe sat beside her father's couch, an expression of patient suffering on her beautiful face. What could it mean, the old man lying there so pale and still, one arm limp and bandaged by his side, and the attending physician in the room looking eagerly from the window up and down the darkening road, those strange sounds in the room over our heads, at each repetition of which the old man moved

uneasily, moaning as if in pain. I could bear it no longer. I must speak!

"Where is Elsie?" I asked.

My question was evaded, but Miriam Calthorpe addressed her father, tears shining in her eyes:

"Papa, is it not best that Katherine should go to Elsie? It may be in her power to soften the coming agony and make it the easier to bear!"

"Yes, Miriam, it is best! But tell her first—she must know all!"

"Miss Farquarson—Katherine—you are drawn so near to us in our sorrow—you have not known my brother, I believe—my brother Geoffrey?"

"Geoffrey—Geoffrey Calthorpe—no, I have not."

"Then you do not know what we have lost through this terrible misfortune."

"Dead?" I cried.

"No, not dead; would to Heaven it were so!"

It was Miriam's father who spoke, and afterwards added:

"Geoffrey Calthorpe is hopelessly insane!"

"Oh!" cried Miriam, "how will Elsie bear it! Heavy as the stroke falls on me, my heart bleeds for that dear child."

"Bear it? Elsie? What is he to her?"

"Oh! Katherine, he is your brother now—oh! forgive us all. Elsie is his wife!"

That was all I knew! Roused at last from that death-like swoon I seemed waking from a stupor of years, to hear ringing in my ears those dreadful words spoken by Miriam Calthorpe. Then with what iron nerve I could summon, I went about the task that awaited me. Oh, can I tell you of my passage through that fiery ordeal? Somehow, I managed to tell Elsie that the blow had fallen, and that the attendants were waiting to bear her maniac husband from his home—somehow struggled to keep my heart from bursting as I witnessed that last, long lingering look strained from those agonised eyes upon the closed carriage that bore him away—heard her with clasped hands hoarsely ejaculate:

"My beloved, not to see you for the last time—for one parting kiss—for one final embrace—oh, Heaven! it is cruel, too cruel!"

Then that anguished wail broke forth, and my darling lay in my arms a lifeless burden.

"Alas! reader, life is made up of such partings!"

During those long weeks of Elsie's illness I derived great comfort from Miriam Calthorpe—she who when my own strength failed took my place beside that sick child, her lovely, patient face beaming with love so great, one would have thought there were indeed ties of blood between them. It was from the elder Calthorpe that I learned the following story told in these words, briefly:

"To you, whom the ban of my past life has also overshadowed, it is but meet that I should relate these facts. You may not know, Katherine, that this insanity to which my son has fallen a recent victim, is hereditary in our family, descending to him from his mother's side through three generations. My poor, dear wife lost her reason at his birth, and died shortly after, leaving me, save for my motherless children, utterly alone in the world. Since reaching his majority, when the unhappy fate of his ancestors was made known to him, my son has felt this evil haunting over him. He was a noble-souled fellow, whom not to love seemed impossible, and Heaven knew we did all in our power to avert the calamity that threatened him, but in vain. He went abroad, to travel through Palestine and the East, his former tutor accompanying him in all his wanderings. He returned, wishing, as he said, to die. Then he met your sister, and that fatal love which was the result overflowed his cup of misery, since it must prove alike disastrous to both, since he could look forward to nought save a hopeless, aimless existence. I could see the approach of the terror—he could feel it; and once last autumn I could with difficulty restrain my poor boy in his desire to plunge headlong and grapple fiercely with the waves. They were married—he and Elsie, ere they left Paris—she knowing the whole sad secret, and loving him through all, dear child. There remains only to tell you how Geoffrey, under spur of madness, stealing into my chamber, that dreadful night, attacked me in my sleep; and how, waking to the terrible truth, I wrestled with him in the dark. Ere assistance came he felled me, my arm being broken under me, his heavy weight pressing me down. The physicians have no hopes of him now, but there may be periods of sanity when we expect to see him, and I desire that Elsie may avail herself of these opportunities also. I have not long to live; Heaven only knows how welcome the end would be, if it were not that I should leave those precious ones behind. But He will have them in His keeping; I shall not fear; and when at last He shall gather them into His fold, then, too, shall I find peace!"

Five years have passed away, working their

wondrous changes. Miriam and her father have gone to rest, sinking to slumber as sweetly as anacis fold their petals up at eventide. I am sitting to-day on the lawn of the old homestead, with Bertha Desmond at my side, waiting, waiting! In my arms I hold a little golden-haired child, whom we call Geoffrey, and Elsie, his mother, reads to us with a sweet, tender voice.

Elsie waits; and somewhere in the future is reserved for her a joy unspeakable. There is a new dawn in that portion of *Materia Medica* which treats of mental maladies, and we are looking forward with patient, abiding hope—Elsie, Bertha, and I, to the time when Geoffrey Calthorpe shall walk forth with unclouded intellect, a sane man, under the gracious skies of heaven. M. D. B.

#### COMETS AND METEORS.

WHEN, more than two centuries ago, Kepler asserted that there are more comets in the universe than there are fishes in the ocean, he was laughed at as a theorist. Yet the assertion was founded on sufficient evidence—it was, indeed, founded on evidence which, paradoxical as it may sound, is not simply probable, but absolutely certain—the evidence from probability. He saw that the chances against the detection, by us, of any comet, supposed to be selected at random from the hosts which people space, are so enormous that for every single comet we recognise there must be millions which escape our observation. Therefore he argued conclusively (only the men of his day could not see the force of the argument), that since many comets have been discovered, untold millions must exist throughout space.

We now know that the illustrious German was right; nay, we know that the theory which seemed to his contemporaries so startling, fell very far short of the truth. For he only knew of those bright comets which are palpable to ordinary vision. He had no reason to believe that for every large comet there are myriads of smaller ones—that is, of comets not merely inferior in apparent size and brilliancy, but in reality minute by comparison.

Now I propose to exhibit the really startling conclusions which may be drawn from what we know of the cometic and meteoric system within the solar scheme, these conclusions being not hypothetical, as they might be thought on a first view, but as legitimately inferable from the evidence as Kepler's daring proposition respecting the comets which people space. I propose to show that the solar system is full of comets and meteors—in this sense, that though the combined volume of all the cometic or meteoric substance existing in any given space within the solar system may be almost indefinitely minute, yet that no considerable space (no space so large, perhaps, as the moon's globe) exists without some such substance within it. I wish it to be particularly understood that I am not about to theorise. I propose only to pass by legitimate inferences from the known and unknown, and I shall be especially careful to distinguish what is doubtful, or, at least, not absolutely certain, from that which must be held by all who understand the laws of probability to be thoroughly established by the evidence.

Let us picture our earth circling on her wide orbit around the sun. That orbit has a diameter of about 180 millions of miles, and therefore the space through which the earth actually sweeps on her course round the sun must be regarded as being (relatively to him) a ring of cross-section equal to the earth's. We know what the actual volume of that ring must be; it is, in fact, equal to the volume of a circular cylinder nearly 8,000 miles in diameter, and equal in height to the circumference of the earth's orbit. But the real volume of the ring does not at present concern us.

Now in sweeping onwards upon her orbit, the earth encounters a multitude of meteoric substances of different size and weight, some exceedingly minute no doubt, others—a very few—weighing many hundred weights or even tons.

This particular ring of space within the solar system is peopled, then, with meteoric bodies. This fact is beyond all question. Let us inquire, however, how many meteors may be supposed to be within the ring at any moment; then afterwards proceeding to inquire whence they came and whither they go, as also according to what laws they are associated with each other and with other bodies, we shall find conclusions of a somewhat surprising character flowing from this first simple relation.

It has been calculated by Professor Newton\*

\* The results of this calculation are quoted in Mr. Lockyer's "Elementary Lessons in Astronomy;" but with a reminiscence, somewhat too common in that compilation, they are not referred to their author. It cannot be too often insisted upon that not courtesy alone, but common justice requires that all special results of this sort should be distinctly assigned to him who has been at the pains to calculate them.

that the average number of meteors which daily enter the earth's atmosphere is about 400,000,000, though of these only 7,500,000 are such as can be seen by the naked eye. Now the earth occupies, as we know, about 365½ days in circling around the sun, therefore she encounters in the course of a year no less than 146,100,000,000 meteors of various dimensions, but the great majority exceedingly minute. And by the way, before passing on it may be well to consider by what amount the earth's actual weight increases each year under the influence of this continual rain of meteors; for it must be remembered that only a very small proportion of them can escape after once reaching her atmosphere by passing grazingly through it. Suppose we assume that on the average 1000 of these meteors weigh one ounce—this will not be thought a very exaggerated estimate of their weight—then the earth's weight increases yearly by 146,100,000 ounces, or by 913,125 pounds, or by upwards of 4000 tons. The moon, too, must increase in weight by upwards of 250 tons per annum. Yet these accretions, enormous though they seem, are utterly insignificant compared with the volume either of the earth or moon. Were it otherwise the moon would soon begin to show the effect of the increased weight of her primary and herself, by circling more swiftly around the earth.

Let it be remembered that though these results are so far doubtful that we have deduced them in ignorance of the actual average weight of the meteors our earth encounters, yet no doubt whatever rests on the conclusion that each year the earth grows many hundreds of tons heavier by the continual fall of meteoric substances upon her surface.

But now we have to inquire whether the ring round which the earth travels is the only part of the solar system which is thus peopled by meteors. Such a conclusion seems in itself altogether unlikely, but yet the consequences which follow from supposing any very large proportion of the sphere ruled over by the sun to be thus peopled, are so astonishing that we may well require very clear evidence before admitting that this supposition is just.

Certain peculiarities of meteoric motion serve conclusively to establish the thesis that our earth's orbit is by no means exceptionally thronged with meteors. Those peculiarities I shall indicate somewhat briefly, premising that the evidence we have on the matter is absolutely beyond question.

In the first place, there are certain parts of her path where the earth encounters more meteors than elsewhere. Picturing her as she swiftly travels round the sun, we have to conceive the existence along certain parts of her path of richer aggregations of meteors than exist elsewhere. Now, if it were possible for an aggregation of meteors to stay in a certain definite part of the solar system, we should not learn much from the peculiarity here considered. But there is no such thing as rest under the influence of the sun's tremendous attractive energies. Those aggregations, if initially at rest, would in no brief space fall in upon the sun's surface. The fact, then, that year after year, as the earth returns to the same spot of her orbit, she either always, or commonly, shows that there must be a system travelling round the sun, and intersecting the earth's orbit in that particular region.

One thing, then, has become very obvious. The whole of any such system, except the part crossed by the earth (a mere line through the system, one may almost say, since the earth's diameter is as nothing in such a relation), passes altogether clear of the earth's orbit. We must, therefore, add to the conceptions we have already formed of meteoric abundance this further consideration, that meteoric systems exist of whose members only the minutest conceivable fraction ever become recognisable by us.

Mentioning, in passing, that fifty-six such systems have been distinctly recognised by Mr. Alexander Herschel, while German astronomers have shown that yet larger numbers exist, the reader will begin already to see that we are upon a subject involving cosmical relations of the utmost importance.

R. A. P.

**OBJECTS OF THE NEW BANKRUPTCY LAW.**—One of the great objects sought to be obtained by the new bankruptcy law was cheapness in the winding-up of bankrupt estates. This result, the *Law Times* considers, has not been secured, for we are told by one thoroughly well informed by experience, that the cost of a liquidation is rarely less than 30 per cent. of the assets. The simple result is that the work is thrown in a great measure into the hands of accountants, who are generally sufficiently able and experienced to dispense with legal advice. At any rate, it is their interest so to do, and, in the large centres particularly, much jealousy regarding the encroachments of these gentlemen exists among the legal profession.



This is a very undesirable state of things, for which it is not easy to design a remedy. At present it is very difficult to see what practical advantage has been gained by the passing of the new law.

## FACETIÆ.

**VOLUNTEER INTELLIGENCE.**—English butts are in steady request at London-hall.—*Fun.*

**AT FAULT.**—An anxious inquirer is informed that the classical rendering of the proverb "birds of a feather flock together" is not by any means what he suggests.—*Fos foribus hant.*—*Fun.*

**PEERS PECKING AT PEERS.**—Earl Granville, the other day, had occasion to remark that the Law Lords always had a tendency to pull each other's Bills to pieces. Doves bill and coo; but a different sort of billing is natural to birds of prey.—*Punch.*

### NOTA BENE.

**Little girl (at South Kensington):** "Oh, do look, Miss Skimble! There's a funny thing!"

**Governess:** "My dear, how often have I told you not to use that word *here*. Government object to it. You should say 'curious' or 'remarkable.' Recollect that!"—*Punch.*

**Mrs. RAMSBOTHAM ON LAWS.**—A gentleman of republican tendencies observed to Mrs. Ramsbotham that in England there was one law for the rich and another for the poor. "Of course there is," returned Mrs. Ramsbotham, who has been lately reading history, "there's the Poor Law, and the Sumptuary Law; and quite right too."—*Punch.*

**LONDON ANATOMY.**—The Metropolitan Railway will now take country visitors into the very "heart of London." Not much to be gained by that, even if it exists. At all events, so many things have run right through the Heart of London are now, that it ought to be pretty considerably like a Dead Heart by this time.—*Punch.*

**READY, AYE, READY!**—An old gentleman of seventy was going to be married to a girl of seventeen. One day a friend surprised him tenderly embracing his intended. "I don't wonder at your astonishment," said the young lady, readily, to the intruder; "you don't generally expect to find old heads on young shoulders." The marriage was broken off.—*Punch.*

### AN INVESTMENT.

"TELL me, my dear, who's that little man they all seem so dotingly fond of?"

"That, uncle! Oh, that's Lord Alberic Lackland."

"Well, he's not much to look at!"

"No, poor fellow! But he's awfully hard up, and mamma always likes to have a lord at her dances, so papa gives him ten guineas to come—that is, lends it, you know—and a guinea extra for every time my brother Bob calls him *Ricky*!"—*Punch.*

**CORRECT CARDS.**—Most people have seen, with great pleasure, the announcement that the Post-office intends to issue "Correspondence Cards," which shall contain, on one side, a name and address, and, on the other, a written message, and be carried through the Post-office for a halfpenny. In these days of cheapsaving and skinflint economy, it is gratifying to find one Government department is able to give the public *carte blanche*.—*Judy.*

### THOSE EVENING BELLS.

**New Parson to Bumpkin:** "Oh! Dixon, I'm so grieved to see you with that wicked top, when everything is calling you to church. Do you not hear the beautiful sounds bidding you come? Do you not hear the—"

**Bumpkin:** "No, a doant! Bells make such a row—a doant hear nothing."—*Will-o'-the-Wisp.*

### A SOVEREIGN COLOUR.

The Photographic News announces as a new discovery a thing we should be inclined to consider no novelty.

Experiments made to ascertain what colours are most quickly and easily perceived by the eye, seem to show that bright yellow is the colour most easily distinguished, and is therefore suggested for railway signals.

We know instances in which people could have an eye for nothing else but objects of this "bright yellow." They were, we may add, flat circular objects of a metallic nature, and about a thousand of them go to make up a thousand pounds.—*Fun.*

"Look here, boy," said a nervous old gentleman, to a boy, who was munching sugar-candy at a lecture; "you are annoying me very much."—"No, I ain't," replied the boy; "I'm a-gnawing this sugar-candy."

**GOING THE WRONG WAY TO WORK.**—The Post-office authorities announce that the Haverfordwest and Wexford cable was broken one morning last week, and that "immediately stops were taken to repair it." Here's another instance of Government telegraph mismanagement. If the damage had been done to one of the land telegraphs, one could un-

derstand a ladder being required to make it good; but to take "steps" to repair a submarine cable is very like going to the Derby in a boat.—*Judy.*

**LORDS AND LADIES.**—At the last monthly meeting of the Victoria Society, a Mr. Hoskins is reported to have read a paper, suggesting that the House of Lords "should be strengthened by the admission of 500 ladies." Judy (who, as everybody knows, is a peeress in her own right) is afraid this proposal is not likely to be carried out just yet, though such an addition to the talking powers of the House is worthy of consideration. All lords are not peers, and all ladies are (as yet) not peeresses, nor likely to be. Though, for the matter of that, all peers are lords, and all peeresses are, of course, ladies.—*Judy.*

**A HORSE AND BULL STORY.**—The Derby prophets generally are abused for not giving any hint of the powers of Kingcraft. Well, the *Illustrated News* (to be sure, it was after the race) did undoubtedly allude to Kingcraft as an extremely clever horse. It said: "Kingcraft was saddled by himself." Talk about a clever horse after that!—*Fun.*

## THE FAIRIES' GIFTS.

In a far-away country, some centuries since, (If the story is false, it is certainly pleasant), Two fairies attended the birth of a prince, And—after their custom—each brought him a present.

"I bring him," one whispered, "the eagle's bright vision,

So keen and wide-reaching that even a fly The monarch may mark with the sharpest precision,

However remote, at a glance of his eye."

"An excellent gift for a sovereign, no doubt," The other responds, "is a good pair of eyes; But an eagle would scorn to be peering about, With intent to remark the behaviour of flies!"

"And so to your present I beg to unite A gift of my choosing—well suited to kings, And others no less; to the eagle's keen sight I add his contempt for all trivial things!"

"In sooth," said the first, "I confess that I think Your cautious restriction exceedingly wise; How often it happens that merely to wink Is the properest use we can make of our eyes!"

J. G. S.

## GEMS.

AMONGST such as out of cunning hear all and talk little, be sure to talk less; or, if you must talk, say little.

VANITY is the fruit of ignorance. It thrives most in subterranean places, never reached by the air of heaven and the light of the sun.

THE reciprocal respect due from man to man ought always to appear in company, and curb all the irregularities of our fancies and humours.

NEVER seek to be entrusted with your friend's secret, for, no matter how faithfully you may have kept it, you will be liable in a thousand contingencies to the suspicion of having betrayed it.

We should always rest satisfied with doing well, and let others talk of us as they please, for they can do us no injury, although they may think they have found a flaw in our proceedings, and are determined to rise on our downfall, or profit by our injury.

THOUGH ten thousand tongues should chant our praises, they would sound inharmonious in our ears, if conscience join not in the choir.

It is better to tread the path of life cheerfully, skipping lightly over the thorns and briars that obstruct your way, than to sit down under every hedge lamenting your hard fate. The thread of a cheerful man's life spins out much longer than that of a man who is continually sad and desponding. Prudent conduct in the concerns of life is highly necessary; but if distress succeed, dejection and despair will not afford relief. The best thing to be done when evil comes upon us, is not lamentation, but action; not to sit and suffer, but to rise and seek the remedy.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

**COLDS, COUGHS.**—The primary cause of colds generally arises from checked perspiration which was escaping from the pores, and by producing acidity in the stomach. When, therefore, we come in from a walk, and change a state of exercise for one of rest, it must be our endeavour to prevent this sudden check by keeping up the action of the skin, and when we take off our out-door clothing, immediately brush the hair, and either wash the face and neck, or rub them well with a hand-towel.

Should any cold make its appearance by sneezing, etc., take half a tea-spoonful of sal volatile in half a wine-glassful of water. This, being an alkali, will neutralise the acidity and immediately stop the sneezing. This plan I have pursued for years with great success.

**COUGH REMEDY. A RECIPE.**— $\frac{1}{2}$  pint brandy,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. strained honey, 2 drachms oil tar. Dose,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tea-spoonful three times a day. Set the bottle into a kettle of cold water and let it heat over a hot stove—it is then ready for use. This is the recipe for making a celebrated cough mixture.

**USES OF VINE LEAVES.**—From experiments which I have made, I find that, on being dried, which should be done in the shade, and infused in a tea-pot, the leaves of the vine make an excellent substitute for tea. I have also found that, on being cut small, bruised, and put into a vat or mashing-tub, and boiling water poured on them in the same way as done with malt, the prunings of the vine produce liquor of a fine vinous quality, which, on being fermented, makes a very fine beverage, either strong or weak, as you please; and, on being distilled, produces an excellent spirit of the nature of brandy. In the course of my experiments, I found that the fermented liquor from the prunings, particularly the tendrils, when allowed to pass the vinous, and to run into the acetous fermentation, makes uncommonly fine vinegar.

P. A.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

MISS GARRETT has just been received as a M.D. of the Paris Faculty. It is the first time that a lady has graduated at the Paris Faculty since its foundation.

THE United States debt statement of the 1st of June shows the total amount, less the amount in the treasury, to be 2,406,562,371 dollars. The decrease of debt in the month of May amounted to 14,301,962 dollars, and since the 1st of March 31,766,105 dollars.

We learn from Washington that the Postmaster-General has at length accepted the offers of the Cunard and Inman Companies for the conveyance of mails to Europe.

THE bill by which the Telegraph Acts of 1863 and 1869 are extended to the Channel Islands has been issued. It gives the Postmaster-General power to purchase any of the existing lines to the islands.

THE coach is a French invention. The first coach seen in England was in (about) 1563. In 1626 the vehicle was first plied for hire.

THE quantity of ink purchased for the use of the Government last year amounted to 7,916 gallons of liquid ink and 169,302 ink powders. The cost was 3,112*s.* 6*d.*, of which 1,500*s.* was purchased and paid for by the East Indian Government. The whole was supplied by private contract.

IN fulfilment of an intention which had been recently formed by the deceased himself, Mr. Woolner has been commissioned by the family to execute a bust of Mr. Charles Dickens. The sculptor visited Gad's Hill for the purpose of taking a cast of the deceased's features.

A STEAM omnibus has begun to run regularly between Edinburgh and Portobello, a distance of about three miles. The omnibus is constructed to carry 65 passengers—21 inside and 44 outside. The trips already made have been very successful.

HE NEVER TOLD A LIE.—Mr. Park, in his travels through Africa, relates that a party of armed Moors having made a predatory attack on the flocks of a village at which he was stopping, a youth of the place was mortally wounded in the affray. The natives placed him on horseback, and conducted him home, while the mother preceded the mournful group, proclaiming all the excellent qualities of her boy, and by her clasped hand and streaming eyes discovered the inward bitterness of her soul. The quality for which she chiefly praised her boy formed of itself an epithet so noble, that even civilised life could not aspire to a higher. "He never," said she, with pathetic energy, "never, never told a lie."

THE rumour that the small arms factory at Enfield is to be removed to Woolwich turns out to be unfounded. The present situation of the factory, where it has grown from a mere work-shop, is most inconvenient; but the expense of removing its enormous and intricate machinery will not permit of the proposed change, however beneficial it might ultimately prove. Meanwhile, the Government has other views with respect to Woolwich Dockyard, and a plan has been prepared, by which it is proposed to transfer four-fifths of the area, and a considerable part of the river frontage, to the War Department; and the inhabitants are about appealing to Mr. Gladstone to fulfil his promise to sell the whole of the yard, in order that it may be converted into factories.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. W. W. and F. B. E.—The verses are declined with thanks.

FLORA's desires cannot be accomplished. She must accept the lot provided for her by nature.

FLORRY.—Apply spirits of turpentine with a clean flannel, and rub the parts well.

AMPHION.—As far as the law of this country is concerned, an Englishman, being a civilian, is at liberty to enlist in the French army.

MARY C.—It is almost impossible entirely to eradicate the marks; something can be done by a daily application of glycerine accompanied by a gentle rubbing.

SERAPHINE.—Washes and such-like external applications will not avail you. Ask your chemist to supply you with a little alterative medicine.

MISS A. C.—We beg to refer you to our standing notice at the foot of this page, and to remind you that silence is usually construed as a negative.

ROBERT C.—In several respects, the verses are faulty. The subject also is treated with so little originality that the idea of a badly executed plagiarism is suggested.

JESSIE.—Some early morning walks will help you to conquer your bashfulness. The growth of the eyelashes is promoted by an occasional clip with a pair of sharp scissors.

DARK ROSE.—The writing is quite good enough for the object you have in view. With regard to your truant swain, think of him no more. If circumstances should ever again bring you together, be as circumspect as you can.

SEA BIRD.—We believe that the town in question does not give its name to any newspaper. Probably the local intelligence appears in a journal published in one of the larger towns in the vicinity of the place about which you are interested.

C. V. A.—Consuls have more to do with commercial matters than diplomacy, and are not usually classed among diplomatists. Diplomatic agents rank among themselves in each class according to the priority in date of the official intimation of their arrival at a particular court. There are four classes: 1. Ambassadors; 2. Envoys and Ministers Plenipotentiary; 3. Resident Ministers; and 4. Charges d'Affaires.

GIPSEY.—Trials for witchcraft were common down to the year 1700 or thereabouts. Sir Matthew Hale passed sentence of death on two women for this offence in 1664. In 1716 Mrs. Hicks and her child, aged nine, were condemned to death for selling their souls to the devil. But the penal statutes against witchcraft were repealed in 1736, and the pretended exercise of such an art is now punished by imprisonment.

JULIA.—The Koh-i-noor diamond, now in the possession of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, is a gem of great antiquity, and has passed through the hands of many potentates before it found its present resting-place. It was taken from the celebrated mines of Golconda upwards of three hundred years ago.

ERKENHILDA.—We cannot find any traces of the name you send us in connection with imaginary miracles worked in Ireland; nor is the name otherwise known to us. An account of the famous shrine of St. Patrick, in the county of Donegal, and of the superstitious observances of the pilgrims who resorted thither, may be found in a book called "Richardson's Folly of Pilgrimages in Ireland."

ESTHER.—As payments of the prize money were actually made to your late husband, he must have received all to which he was entitled. The recent discussion was concerning disputed claims only, and had no reference to claims which have been admitted and discharged.

ONE, &c.—A magpie can be taught to speak. That is to say, the bird is gifted with natural powers of repeating short phrases which are constantly spoken in its presence. It is one of the mocking-bird species. The tradition about splitting its tongue is nonsensical. Such an operation would make the bird dumb for ever. In reply to your other question, there is a great probability that the sea-baths would prove serviceable.

F. X.—As the couple intend to be married by banns, no other preliminary is requisite. That is, the banns must be simply published three times in the parish church of that locality where the persons reside. Although it will not affect the validity of the marriage in England, it may be useful to remind you that by the law of France a man under twenty-five cannot marry without the consent of his parents; and that the refusal of this consent is often a serious matter.

R. A. P.—The quantities we gave you in a former number are correct. The manipulation is probably not quite as it should be. Personal instruction is the only remedy for this; it would be useful for you to pay a visit to one of the manufactories where the article is produced, and try to gain an insight by looking on.

CLARA B.—It will be best for you to put an end to the acquaintance immediately. Young ladies should always take alarm when their lovers propose a private marriage. It would be presumptuous in you to suppose that by marriage you could eradicate his bad habits. As his professed love for you has not hitherto kept him steady, it is probable that he has merely imagined that he loved you. It will, we fear, take a long course of discipline and a great deal of trouble before the promised reform is really effected.

DAN.—The condition of the hair depends in a great measure upon the state of the general health. The one sympathises with the other. Possibly, your whole system requires bracing by a visit to the sea-side. However, there is a simple local application which may be tried: rub the scalp with onions periodically: the stimulating effects of this vegetable may arrest the decay of which you complain.

J. BASS.—It is often said that the hen that hatches the egg is the mother of the chick, but this is an opinion with which we do not coincide. We decidedly think that the hen that lays the egg is the mother of any chick that may issue from it; and for this reason, that the laying hen is emphatically the medium through which the creative power is displayed in a way to which there is no parallel. Machines have been invented which can hatch, but no power of man has produced an instrument that will lay an egg.

## THE DAINTY CHAIN.

I am forging chains of daisies,  
While I sit upon the green,  
As a little laughing maiden, in  
The summer's golden sheen.

And the squire and the young parson  
Have passed me on the lea;  
But what are they to Willie, who  
Has vowed to marry me?

I weave the modest daisies' mong  
The tangles of my hair,  
And look down in the clear mill-pool,  
And see them blooming there.

Crimson tips and the gold tints  
Of my ringlets streaming free,  
A sweet young bride for Willie, who  
Has vowed to marry me.

And how I wish that Willie dear  
Were with me here again,  
And clasped unto my warm young heart  
By this sweet daisy chain!

But I'll trip a happy maiden through  
The sunshine on the lea;  
I dearly love you, Willie, and  
I know you'll marry me!

W. S. R.

A CAPTAIN.—The United States refused their assent to the declaration of Paris of 1856, by which Great Britain and six other powers agreed to abolish privateering. England and the other powers who acceded to the declaration are bound to discontinue the practice in the event of hostilities with each other, but, as matters stand at present, if we should have the misfortune to go to war with the United States, we should not be bound to abstain from privateering.

A CATHOLIC.—The practice of confession, auricular confession, as it is termed, is not so very ancient. Though originated in the ninth century, it did not become obligatory till the thirteenth. It was Pope Innocent III.—who was made pope in 1198, and who excommunicated King John of England—that first enjoined confession once a year to a priest, who is bound under heavy penalties not to reveal what is confided to him.

MAY.—There is no precise time fixed at which young persons should be confirmed. They usually present themselves at about the age of fifteen. Sometimes persons of double that age and more appear before the bishop for confirmation. The person confirmed takes upon himself, or herself, the vows which were made in his behalf when he was baptised, and thus virtually declares his earnest intention to lead a good life, and to resist with determination the tendency of his nature to follow evil things.

BYRON.—The handwriting will do very well. The choice of a pen is entirely a matter for your own discretion. In the Prisons department of the Civil Service there are three distinct offices—namely, clerks, stewards, and schoolmasters. The subjects for examination in the first are writing from dictation and arithmetic, including the rule of three and practice. In the second the additional subjects are vulgar fractions and bookkeeping. In the third the candidates will be examined in the foregoing as well as in reading, decimal fractions, grammar, and the English language, the Bible, school management, English history, geography, elements of geometry, and Latin.

EDWARD.—We do not wish to dissuade you from the speculation which is described in your "roseate" letter. There are, indeed, some instances on record of speculators realising fortunes in the course of a few years; but it must be admitted that these cases are exceptional, the rule being that it requires a long life of industry and frugality to realise an honourable competency with which to solace the closing days of life. We must content ourselves by suggesting to you that some share of your ardent disposition should be devoted to a cautious and earnest inquiry as to the actual facts connected with your enterprise, while we remind you that in human nature there exists a strong disposition to contemplate what is distant through a magnifying medium, and to believe whatever the confident assertions of others, or the love of wonder in ourselves, suggests with regard to reported wealth.

W. H. R.—The commendable points in your productions are a certain fluency and force of expression. At first sight these are promising signs. But what are we

to say when, having exhorted you to laborious study, you send us an effusion in which not only is exceeding carelessness discernible, but which is characterised by yourself, and truly so, as jumbling, false, and wretched? The outpouring of conscious dullness is a very different thing from that becoming sense of modesty possessed by most people of ability. If you suffer your plinings for excellence to take the place of that plodding industry which cannot be dispensed with by the greatest genius, you will become the victim of a vain ambition, and experience disappointments the most severe. Probably you will now carry your resolution into effect and abandon your literary tastes; but remember, your want of industry in this matter will, if uncorrected, be a hindrance to you in any pursuit. It is folly to stand idly gazing and wishing; if a man would achieve anything he must work, and work hard.

BLANCH L.—1. Remove the stalks from the fruit, then boil it for some time in a preserving pan; let the pan be uncovered and the contents frequently skimmed. When the skimming has been completed, add some good sugar, in the proportions of three-quarters of a pound to a pound of fruit. Continue the boiling for a few minutes longer, then pour out into jars. Let the preserves stand twenty-four hours before they are covered; use as covers white paper dipped in brandy, and then a thicker paper over the top; the edges of the outer paper must be pasted round the pot to exclude the air. 2. The name "Jane" is supposed to signify Divine Grace; "Richard," powerful; and "William," a champion of the people. 3. The handwriting is very legible, although rather unformed.

C. H. J. M., twenty, medium height, hazel eyes, brown hair, fair, fond of home, and loving; about to leave the Navy with 1001, a year. Respondent must be of medium height, fair, and respectable.

YARDARK JACK, twenty-two, 5ft. 5in., fair, loving, temperate, and in the Navy. Respondent must be about twenty, good-looking, and fond of home.

YENIADA, tall, fair, young, and good looking. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, and have a good income; a naval or military officer preferred.

ALPHA ALBERT, eighteen, 5ft. 6in., dark hair, and dark blue eyes. Respondent must be in a good position.

GALLANT TOM, twenty-two, 5ft. 7in., dark, loving, fond of home and music, and in the Navy. Respondent must not exceed twenty-one, and be good looking, and able to wash a shirt and cook a dinner.

CHARLIE, twenty-two, fair, can sing, and dance a hornpipe, and in the Navy. Respondent must not exceed nineteen, and be fond of home and music.

HARRY, twenty-one, light hair, fair complexion, gray eyes, a good singer and dancer, and a sailor. Respondent must be good looking. A Norwich girl preferred.

BOB COLLINS, twenty, 5ft. 4in., fair, good looking, fond of home, and in the Navy. Respondent must be fond of music.

S. E. W., twenty-three, medium height, auburn hair, blue eyes, long drooping lashes, graceful, and a good housekeeper. Respondent must be twenty-six, tall, dark, good looking, and fond of home.

A. A. T., eighteen, medium height, dark hair, gray eyes, arched eyebrows, and musical. Respondent must be tall, fair, with handsome whiskers and moustache, and affectionate.

MAGGIE, twenty, 5ft. 5in., rather dark, gray eyes, and dark brown hair. Respondent should be a seafaring man, in a good position, kind, and affectionate.

ANNIE, twenty-two, fair, the only daughter of a tradesman, and used to business. Respondent to be from twenty-four to thirty, dark, tall, and in a business that requires the attention of a lady.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LITTLE GINGER is responded to by—"Solina," twenty-one, medium height, fair, pretty, amiable, and domesticated.

M. by—"Polly May," medium height, dark hair and eyes, fair complexion, domesticated, and in a good position.

HARVEY VERNON by—"Emma R.," eighteen, rather tall, dark eyes and hair, good tempered, affectionate, and wears her hair in curls.

KATIE by—"Harry A.," nineteen, medium height, fair, well connected, loving, and has money.

MARGUERITE by—"Octavius," tall, curly auburn hair, very musical, and loving—"R. A. C.," twenty-one, 5ft. 7in., affectionate, and has an income; and—"A. M.," twenty, kind, loving, fond of music and flowers, and in a good position.

LILL would be glad if "J. H." would make an appointment.

MAUDE writes for "Beauclerc's" carte.

HERNIE writes again to say that he will be glad to hear from "Polly."

C. M.—Your former communication received due attention.

A. H. G.—There is no charge. The name of the lady to whom you respond has not reached us.

SAMUEL B. wishes for "E. H. D.'s" carte.

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